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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
*PARADISE:*

OR A  
DISCOURSE

ON THE

State of Innocence

AND THE

FALL of MAN;

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HISTORY



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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
PARADISE:  
OR A  
DISCOURSE  
ON THE  
STATE of INNOCENCE and the  
FALL of MAN.

(Wherein our Reflections are carried on to the *Grace* of our *Redemption*, by God manifested in the *Flesh*.) With some occasional Thoughts on a late Author or two's unhappy Notions in relation to this Subject.

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By a *Presbyter of the Church of England*  
*God made Man upright, Ecclel. 7.*

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Non multo post institutionem humani generis, placuit animæ per liberum Arbitrium ferre secum quandam velut potentiam Naturæ suæ, & deferere eum à quo condita est. *St. Aug. Qu. Evan. l. 2.*

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THE  
HISTORY  
PARADE  
OF THE  
DISCOVERY  
OF THE  
STATE OF INDEPENDENCE AND  
THE  
LAW OF NATURE

Wherein our Reflections are directed  
to the Cause of our Redeemed, as  
manifested in the History of the  
National Thought on a late Sunday  
two's unhappy Nations in relation to  
this Subject.

By a Presbyter of the Church of England  
and  
God bless them, Amen.

Non minus post in hisce diebus  
necesse placuit animis per litteras  
bitum terre secum quendam velut  
centum Naturae sua de delictis  
quodammodo et. m. v. v. v. v. v.

THE  
HISTORY  
PARADE  
OF THE  
DISCOVERY  
OF THE  
STATE OF INDEPENDENCE AND  
THE  
LAW OF NATURE  
T. G. G. in F. G. G. 1772.

(v)  

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T O T H E

# Devout Reader.

**I**N this little Tract you must not look to have your Fancy amus'd, and your Curiosity tickled with Matters of high Notion and mere Speculation. I confess my Subject, if I had given way, wou'd easily have led me into them. I might have took the Trouble to enquire nicely about the Situation of Paradise, the Distance of Time from the Creation to the Fall, the Condition of Adam's Children, if any such there were, begotten before the Fall, the Influence of Eve's Transgression, in case she had stood single in it, &c. But as these and such like

## vi To the Devout Reader.

Questions, are but solemn Impertinencies, Points barren for Eternity, that if determin'd, wou'd evaporate and leave nothing behind substantial, for Conviction or Improvement, something rather near of kin to the unhappy Fruits of the Tree of Knowledge: So I car'd not to meddle with them, as well for that I pretend not to draw the Curtain that has hid these Secrets from much clearer Heads of past Ages, as because the Holy Ghost seems to discourage 'em by giving so succinct and summary an Account of the primæval State of Things. Being so much in the dark, I chose to walk in the plain Path of practical Divinity, that I might not stumble. Particularly as to Original Sin, where the being too curious and Argumentative might be attended with most hazard, 'twill be found, I tread warily, not interpreting away the Scriptures from it, not deserting the Article of our Church concerning it, nor yet determining positively what Punishment had or had not awaited it (all After-Acts of Grace aside) considered separately from actual or voluntary Offences, but in dedicating the Di-

vine





## To the Devout Reader. vii

vine Providence, in regard of its Being, and its present Consequences. (God must be justified in all his Sayings, and he will be clear both when he judgeth and is judged.)

The whole Discourse turns upon Morality, and yet I do not think I've strain'd for it in any of my Reflections. The History I build upon, tho' so very short, to my Mind, is a full Store-house of Hints improvable to that Purpose. It is indeed a little Book of Ethicks. A Field of Matter opens to Thought in every Passage, and the Sentence, that being once read, flashes an useful Truth in our Face, being read again, suggests another.

To be a little particular: Wou'd we have a general View of Providence, as it stands in relation to Mankind? Here the whole Oeconomy of it is drawn in little; Heaven's Intentions toward us are written, as 'twere, in Short-Hand: All After-Discoveries give us the same thing, only in larger Features and a full Proportion. Wou'd we be well acquainted with

## viii To the Devout Reader.

*with the Sleights and Artifices of our Grand Adversary the Devil? Here is to be had a Specimen of his Subtilty and Guile; The Schemes of future Practice are laid down, and he is still true to his first Plan, abating only for some small Variations that the Difference of Cases doth require. Wou'd we know Nature and all her Movements, where our Souls are softest and most yielding to Temptation, and what is the Handle we give Satan to turn 'em by at his Pleasure? Here the secret Springs and most imprefible Parts of the Humane Frame are pointed to. Wou'd we be ascertained of an essential Connexion between Happiness and Religion? Here we find a Breach made upon both at once, and that what violated the Obligations of the one, shut out of course, from the Seat of the other. Wou'd we, in short, be as much the better for our first Parents in one Sense, as we are the worse in another: that is, be wise at the Expence of their Folly, stand the firmer for their Fall, and tho' they lost Paradise for us, gain Heaven our selves? Here is Provision enough for this*

*in*

## To the Devout Reader. ix

*in the Record of God's Resentments and their Destiny, because God will not be won to give his Blessing in one Age to that which he curs'd in another.*

*Moses gives us these Things for Premises, and leaves us to draw cautionary Conclusions. This I have done in the following Sheets as well as I cou'd. 'Till I had well-nigh finish'd 'em, I did think I was got into a Track almost by my self in the Method of managing the Argument, and the seeming Lonesomness of the Travel made me diffident every step I took. But lighting on Mr. Mede afterwards I found my self happily back'd by his Authority, who cou'd not dismiss any Particular of the History handled by him without dropping first some Doctrinal Application. Mr. Lowth also in his ingenious Directions for the profitable Reading of the Scriptures, makes a like use of this Scripture, but that very briefly: And perhaps where the Matter rose with so copious a Fruitfulness, some Advices I've drawn out at length, had been better glanc'd at only, and so left as Texts for thee, Reader, to preach to thy self upon at leisure.*

## x To the Devout Reader.

*The Reason of Things, I'm satisfy'd, consequently their Beauty, lies in a little compass; but I cou'd'nt stop my Pen in the improving Part, and you know he that has Fancy to enlarge, has not always Judgment to contract. Besides an Enlargement sometimes makes up in Use what it wants in Art, as it places things in different Lights in regard to the different Capacities of the Readers.*

*The Choice of my Subject sure will not be excepted to, than which none can come more home to the greatest Concerns of all Mankind; and to the particular Exigencies of the Times, which have given much into Scepticism, and in no Instance more than in that of running down the Mosaic History as an old musty Piece, not worth the owning. Nor can I be said to give dark and uncomfortable Prospects of Man's Condition; because my Discourse does not set in a Cloud any more than it begins in one. I take our Redemption into the Account, and so the frightful Images of our Fall go off as the Shades of Night in the Brightness of the Morning.*  
*There*

## To the Devout Reader. xi

*There is one thing more I wou'd take notice of, which, for ought I know, may be thought to stand in need of an Excuse, viz. The Freedom I take in introducing Adam and Eve, the one with the other, yea, the one for the other, as this or that Person happens to lie uppermost in my Thoughts, except where their several Apologies require a distinct mention of them; but in that, I conceive, Parity of Circumstances, Nearness of Relation, and Correspondence in Guilt, will bear me out.*

*However as to the main of the Book, I doubt not but I shall be pardon'd, as easily as I can pardon my self, for thus laying out some of the looser Hours which hang upon a solitary Temper, and an unemploy'd Life. Reading is but a more plausible kind of Idleness, if not follow'd with Reflection; and Reflection itself is no better if it does not some way or other profit Mankind. Now all other ways of profiting being well-nigh out of my Power, I can but endeavour it this, that is, by publishing the private Exercises of my Retirement, by which, if I shall not benefit others, I have my self.*

*But,*



## xii To the Devout Reader.

*But, good Reader, before I leave thee,  
I have a Request or two to drop with thee;  
That where any thing may seem to carry  
more of the Warmth of Temper and Ima-  
gination, than of the Coolness of Reason,  
thou wilt turn thy Eye another way, to the  
Honesty of my poor Endeavours, and that  
if thou findest thy self beholden to them for  
one sober Impression, you will remember to  
give God the praise, and me thy most fer-  
vent Prayers (who cannot more desire than  
I need them) at the Throne of our Holy  
Saviour,*



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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
PARADISE:

OR, A  
DISCOURSE on the STATE of INNO-  
CENCE, and the FALL of MAN.

Introduction.

**A**MONG the many Advan-  
tages that attend the Study  
of the *Holy Writings*, I know  
none more engaging than this,  
that they carry our Reflecti-  
ons back to the remotest *Antiquity*.  
For the *Soul of Man* stands affected to  
*History*, above all other kinds of Know-  
ledge

ledge ; nor can it have too long a Reach for her grasping Thoughts. She is indeed most easie, when she is poring on the Memorials of former Times, and represents nothing so much as a Stop in her Enquiries ; as if she were a Being interested in the whole Oeconomy of Nature, and in all the Revolutions of Providence ! The Bible then of all Books, will be best able to gratifie her ; as presenting us with *Nature's* Origin and the *first* Draughts, as well as the *After-Works*, of *Providence*, and (what is more concerning still) the *History* of our *selves*. This, because it is so concerning, I shall now consider very particularly, so far as I'm let into it by the *Scripture*. Now there are two *sides* of *Humane* Nature, that deserve a View, a bright and a dark one. The Former respects it as it came out of the Hands of God. The Latter was a Consequence of its being *left in the Hands of its own \* Counsel*. I intend Both for my following Meditations, but the latter chiefly ; because it is the side that lies most in view, and we have the ill Luck to be best acquainted with it.

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\* *Eccles. 15.*



C H A P.

CHAP. I.

The PARADISIACAL State.

**T**HE Almighty was not content at first to be friend Adam with a Being, unless he grac'd his Reception into it in a manner very distinguishing: At once possibly to shew how he cou'd rise in Bounty and the Communication of Perfection, and to add to Nature's Wonders, by varying them; as the Firmament owes its Gayety and Flourish to the Circumstance of one Star's differing from another Star in Glory. It had been the Work of more than Five Days, \* to found and furnish for him a Seat of Blessedness; and when all Accommodations were ready that might speak the best of Welcomes; the noble Guest enters by the most beautiful Gate of an heavenly Parentage, to take Possession. He is made but a little lower than the Angels, and in his very Make, crowned with Majesty and Honour, such Majesty as earthly Princes are but Shadows of. They are seldom born such, and when they are, they

Adam's  
Reception in  
Paradise.

\* Gen. ch. 1.

## 4      *The Paradisiacal State.*

know it not, and so the first Years of Sovereignty are quite lost to them. But He took State upon him with his earliest Breath, and as soon as his Eyes were opened upon the World, he beheld himself the mightiest thing in it!

*His Dominion over Beutes.*

For the more solemn Investiture or Assumption of so vast an Empire, the dumb Creation, guided 'tis like, by ministring Angels that for that time disposed of their Motions, like *Natural Subjects*, devoutly throng to do Homage at his coming, and withal, receive their † *Names* from him as Marks of his Propriety: And pursuantly it became a standing Law with them, that every Animal should be wholly his for Duty, for Ornament, or for Delight. So when he call'd unto them, they rose up together in token of Reverence, and Royal Pleasure was no sooner understood than executed. Do but conceive then, if you can, the inward Complacency of a good King placed over a willing People, and you have a faint Image of that he felt upon the kind Occasion. For what so sweet as Power, except the Obedience that is paid to it. 'Tis this that credits Authority, by showing it.

## The Paradisiacal State.

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He did not thencefor-  
ward live independent of *His Animal*  
\* *outward Nature*, but still *Nature*.  
the Tribute flowed from  
her easily. The Earth's Productions were  
a Free-Will-Offering; and what is our  
Day-Labour, was his Inheritance. He  
did not receive his Life at first *absol-*  
*utely*, confirm'd for Perpetuity; but yet  
he had at hand † *the Tree of Life* that  
signified at least, it should be so when  
God saw convenient. He did not ob-  
tain a Patent for *Sloth*, amidst his other  
Advantages, as if qualified thereby to sit  
still and wrap himself up (as is the Cu-  
stom of too happy Monarchs) in a listless  
Inactivity; but then his expected Industry  
lay in a most grateful || *Scene*, and had such  
Matter for its Exercise, as was no more  
beneath him, than 'tis a Reflection on the  
*Deity*, to inspect his Creatures.

'Tis hard to say, whether  
he was richer in his Cir-  
cumstances, or in his Per-  
son. He shone out like the Sun in its full  
Strength, a glorious Piece of Divine Work-  
manship: And no wonder, if we regard  
as well the Solemnity of his Formation,  
as the Pattern after which he was formed;  
All the other Creatures were made by

*The manner of  
his Formation.*

\* Ver. 5, 6. † Ver. 9. || Ver. 15.

B 3

God's



God's Authority; This at it were by his Wisdom. There needed no more toward their Existence, than only to will and speak it. \* *Let it be so, and it was so.* But as if there were so many Secrets and Things of Consequence to be consider'd in his Case, the whole † *Trinity* (Remember this is only a Stoop of Language to set out the great Mystery of Man) was summon'd to conclude upon't; as Architects sit down and consult with themselves and their Friends too, about the Model of those Buildings they intend for more than ordinary State and Magnificence, e'er they actually set about them. They, again, were wrought off first cheaply, if I may so speak, with a more limited Expence of Excellencies upon them. But he was reserv'd (if the Condescension of God's Style will warrant such a Freedom in ours) for Heaven's *second* and best Thoughts, and by a comprehensive Stroke of Art Divine, to be the whole World it self in *little*. Nor did the Design stop here. At the close of the Creation, Man was set up in the large Room of Nature, for the Picture of its *Builder and Maker, God*. The common Mass of Matter || indeed contributed something to his Being, but no more than what

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\* Ch. 1. 3, 6, 9. † Ver. 26. See Patrick  
in Loc. || Ch. 2. 17.

serv'd to speak the Skill of the Contriver, how out of the coarsest Stuff, he could raise the most consummate Beauty; as the *Limner's Art* is best shown by working upon *Canvas*. And tho' his *Body*, because a *Body* cou'd have but faint *Traces* of God's Image drawn upon it, which is *Spiritual*, yet it wanted not Characters of Dignity and Grandeur. *Wisdom* will make any *Man's Face* to shine, and *Converse* with God on the Mount, we know, left a *Glory* upon that of *Moses*. Now *Adam* enjoying these in a superior measure, must needs derive from 'em a peculiar Splendor and Vivacity of Aspect. And hence it was that notwithstanding his inviting Sweetness, he so powerfully awed the Under-World; as the Circle of Glory streaming from *Moses*, made him dreadful to the People.

The Advantages of his external Frame were very particular. It was finish'd all at once, and so knew not the lingring Incapacities of the *Cradle*, and the Uneasinesses of *Growth*. It was made immediately by God himself, and so stood off from those Defects which proceed from the Weakness of second Causes. It was compounded of Elements at perfect Amity among themselves, and so had a true Taste of Life, being bless'd in the consequence with exquisite

*His bodily Advantages.*

fite *Health*, the only Seasoning that gives  
 a Relish to it. It was endowed with an  
 exact Crasis and Constitution, and so cou'd  
 move after its proper Delights easily, and  
 enjoyed 'em most affectingly. Hence the  
*sensitive* Part of his Happiness we can ima-  
 gine great, but we are not qualified to pro-  
 nounce upon it from Experience. For not  
 to mention, that possibly several agreeable  
*Sensations* were laid to sleep upon *the Fall*,  
 which will not awake again till the Morn-  
 ing of the *Resurrection*; neither Faculty  
 nor Object was then what it is now. The  
 one, as being under the Divine Benedic-  
 tion, had a more kindly Flavour, and the  
 other, for the same happy Reason, a much  
 stronger Perception. The one did not suf-  
 fer by an over-rating Fancy, so as to fall  
 short upon Trial; nor the other by undue  
 Gratifications, so as to be over-work'd or  
 wearied out. Diseases too were, at this  
 time of Day but Possibilities, that have so  
 damping an Influence on the good things  
 of Life: And if any of these Viands could  
 have grown stale or cheap, under constant  
 Use, there was the Charm of an inexhau-  
 stible *Variety* to satisfy without satiating.  
 His Pleasures were diversify'd exceedingly,  
 and no Flower wither'd in the Smelling, be-  
 cause the gustful Appetite had still others  
 to fly away to, that wou'd keep alive De-  
 sire by entertaining it.

Nor

Nor are we to think that there was any thing gross or degarding in all This.

*His devout  
Thoughts.*

The intelligent Owner, not only tasted corporeal Delights, alway sincere and pure, without Alloy or Mixture, but also had other Uses to put 'em to, besides those of the *animal* Life. They serv'd as so many winning Invitations to affectionate *Gratitude* and holy *Meditation*: And while he feasted his Eye upon the Creature, he found his Heart warm'd with the Perfections of the Creator sparkling thro' them: As the Sun is seen upon our looking downwards into the Water, and sometimes more perfectly than it cou'd be by a direct View. Whereupon he cou'd contentedly enough slide off from the Business of Appetite, to give up his whole self to seraphick Thoughts, and the Food of Angels. *Eden* was a *Temple* to him, as well as a *Garden of Pleasure*. Somewhat of God appeared every where; this eternal Attribute or that; and whatever did so, the *High Priest* of *Nature*, instantly paid his Devotions to it. Thus divinely, I will suppose, the first Hours of the World were spent, because the sacred \* Text not giving us expressly the Date of Guilt, leaves room for Charity to backward it.

*His inward  
Perfections.*

We are got insensibly in our Reflections, from the Cabinet, to the Jewel in it, his upper Part, the *Soul*; and what was that but a *Paradise within*, yea, an *Heaven* of Contemplation and of Harmony! He was of *Age* as soon as existing, as to Bloom of Understanding, and so undisturb'd with the Difficulties and the Prejudices of Education. He needed not to go to School to the World of Beings, to learn the Theory of their Natures: For how else (to pass over the received Opinion, that upon a transient View he gave 'em Names expressive of their several Natures, which must be known before they cou'd be express'd, how else) cou'd he have govern'd or made use of 'em in a way answerable to their Natures? He needed not to study over the large *Volume* of the Universe, just compos'd, to get acquainted with its great *Author's* Excellencies; for how else cou'd he have worshipp'd him at first in a manner suitable to them, or indeed have held himself bound to worship him? His *Knowledge* had no other Bounds than a finite Essence set it; and yet it cost him nothing, hardly a *Morning Thought*, certainly not a perplexing one. \* A free Emanation learned Men have thought it from the

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\* See Bull's *Serm.* p. 1179, &c.



Fountain of Truth : And it must have been so, or our Saviour had not ascrib'd, *Mat. 19. 5.* those Words to God which *Moses* doth to the *Protoplast* † : It seems, what the one uttered, the other had suggested. The Weariness of the Brain was not yet any more than *the Sweat of the Brow* : If this made one Ingredient in the After-curse, that did another.

If we turn to things of a *moral* Consideration, his *Conscience* was as clear as the Noon-day, and pure, like the first Running of the Grape or Honey-Comb. And what a Solace that was to him, the best of us have hardly Innocence enough to guess. He had a *Will* indeed, but on the better side of Liberty, under a friendly Bias toward the Interests of Virtue. He had *Passions* too; but their Motions were as the bubbling of clean Water in a clear Crystal that raiseth no Defilement : Holy *Reason* had the choosing of Objects for them, and as to measure of Application, might command 'em on and off at Pleasure. These are not precarious *Suppositions*, the mere Results at first of some gay Fancy, or a fine Invention. The Scripture owns 'em all for Truths, by declaring that *God made Man upright*, and so wou'd Reason, tho' there were no Scri-

† Ch. 2. 23, 24.

pture. For Reason tells us, *Man* must have been once what he is not now, *happy*, in regard God, who is, so infinitely, could lie under no Temptation to make him otherwise: And since the *Misery* of *Man* at present, lies in a perpetual Jar or Struggle between the Rational and the Passionate Parts of his Nature, it tells us also wherein that Happiness consisted, even in a good and amicable Agreement of those Faculties. Such a State of Regularity and Perfection, no doubt there was: And what must be the Fruition resulting from it? Ravishment in kind, and in degree unspeakable: As then the Musick will be all Charm and Melody, when every String gives in its proper Sound. In a Word, Heaven and Earth smil'd upon him continually. Philosophy unveil'd it self to him, to entertain his Mind. Nature laid all her Treasures before his Senses. He had too every thing subject to him, and, what is more, himself. Thus was it *done with Man whom the King of Kings delighted to honour!*

*His Frame  
accounted for.*

And here let us make a devout Pause to admire the Wisdom of God in his Creation. Had he had a Dominion over the Creatures, but no Talent above them, he had been but the more masterly sort of Brute. To enable him therefore for managing

gaging this Province, he has the Gift of Reason and \* Understanding; and to prevent their disputing that Dominion with him, and withal heighten his Obligations to the Donor, he stands single in that divine and inestimable Privilege. Hereby their Duty is devolv'd on Man, and so with his Mouth they make their Acknowledgements to God. Had he been a mere Infant at his first appearance in the World, like a Child of high Descent, dropt at his Birth in a strange Place, he wou'd have been able to give no account to himself of his Quality, and when he began to think, might possibly have thought himself the Offspring of Chance. To prevent therefore such dangerous Mistake and Amazement, he enters immediately on the full and perfect Exercise of his Reason. Farther to excite to Anthems of Praise, he is fram'd by Posture and by Disposition, an Observer of the Heavens: But to leave a ground still for Humility, lo! his Foundation is in the Dust. That he might love, admire, and adore the Father of Lights, he is made after his Likeness: But lest he should grow vain upon the Resemblance and Self-sufficient, he's left to hang for a Subsistence on the Charity of his Creator, yea, of his Fellow-Creatures. That a Sense

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\* See Boyle's *Excell. Theol.* p. 75.

of his Excellencies might not jostle out that of Duty, the innocent Infirmities of Sleep and Hunger hang about him to hint to him his Original: And lest those Infirmities should raise in him, on the other hand, the gloomy Thought as if he were of no more consequence than to be a mere Pageant for a Day, a verdant Fruit grew up before him, to be a Means or a Pledge at least, of Immortality. That the Soul, lastly, might be at Liberty and Leisure for it self and its God, the Body was provided for without going, as 'twere to Service for a Maintenance: But that no Capacities might sleep, no Parts not even the lowest, lie upon his Hands useless and unemployed, he has a Vine to prune, as well as to sit under. Thus every Advantage, tho' some of them were physical in their kind, was moral still in its Intendment: And if they had any Abatements or Alays, yet no other than what were necessary to keep the Possessor of them from being exalted above measure by the abundance of his Perfections. So the Scripture draws *Angels* themselves with Wings covering their Faces: As much as to say, no created Perfection could be born without something to qualify it; and Glory, but for the Temperings of a Veil, might be undone by its own Lustre.

Behold

Behold next the Benefit designed him in a suitable *His additio- Companion.* Before, the *nal Happiness in Eve.* only sociable Creature, was the only solitary; and so his very Dignities were a kind of Burden. The Prerogative of *Speech* at least signified nothing to him, while there was no Provision made for exercising it. Accordingly Divine Wisdom it self, as if dissatisfy'd a little with its own \* Oeconomy, pronounced Nature lame and defective under those Circumstances. God therefore form'd out of his Side † *Woman*, and so made one Portion of him, an associate for the other. Now new Delights flow in thick upon him. His great Ideas had a most pleasing Vent. Sprightlier Images arise. 'Tis not necessary to suppose them endowed alike for the Purposes of Felicity. Mutual Dearness, and a kind Interchange of Thoughts, bring home to each the other's Talents and Complacencies; and the direct Light is not stronger than the Reflection.

Virtue too might have been a Gainer by the After-Gift of Providence. Most certainly Heaven had that in view, when it divided *Adam* the better to unite him. As appears from a || remarkable Circumstance, that the first Motion toward this, imme-

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\* Ch. 2. 18. † ---21. || Ver. 16, &c.

diately



diately followed the Delivery of the *Covenant*. Thus God as 'twere tenders at once a Law with one Hand, and a Wife with t'other; intimating thereby, as if the latter was given on purpose to be an *Help-meet for him* in discharging the former. Besides, I think it may be affirm'd (as far as I'm from making a Sacrament of Marriage) there was something sacramental to this effect in the manner of *Eve's* Production for it. And the forward Notice taken of her at first sight, too forward to be the pure Result of his own Discoveries, confirms me in this Thought. *Adam* had been in a profound Sleep during the Operation, but awakes after it into excellent Reflections. \*God brings her to him (for higher Ends, you may be sure, than the dull Intercourses of Sense:) And he then, as if let into the Secret of her Birth by Inspiration, descants most philosophically upon it, reads himself and her a Lecture of Social Morality, in effect tells her, he and she shou'd henceforth be, as they were one Flesh, one and the same Person too in every Action and Scene of Life, and applies the same Remarks to all Marriages in After-times. Yea, as it should seem, he puts his own Advice in practice in the very uttering it; I can fancy some-

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\* Ver. 22, 23, 24.

thing so very good in the Accent with which he bespeaks her, *Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh*, such Sympathy, such tender Resentment, and such Joy, that, did I not go farther into his History, I shou'd be apt to judge him but one remove from Angelical Perfection. With what Advantage however might the well-match'd Pair have carry'd on together the same Spiritual Concernments; and he, by combining his Flame of Devotion with hers, increas'd 'em both up to Extasy and Rapture? How might they have improv'd the Property they had in each other's Affection to the Service of Religion, making Piety an Act, not only of Divine Love, but of Conjugal too? If their Friendship had been thus manag'd, it had been indeed a most Sacred Relation, worthy of the Miracle it cost Heaven in the making, an early Precedent too for virtuous Alliances and Combinations.

But he had a greater Blessing yet than that of a Partner in Happiness and in Duty, the immediate Presence of God. His Communion with God. Communion with his Maker, says a *Father*, was as natural to him as his Being, and we may presume it so, as well from the After-condescensions of the Almighty to inferior Saints, *Abraham, Moses, and the Prophets,* as

as that Resemblance of his Maker then  
 fresh upon him. Having no Fear nor  
 Cause for any, he sunk not under the Cor-  
 respondence; having strong Eyes he cou'd  
 look upon the Sun without being struck  
 blind or dazled. There was a perfect  
 Agreement betwixt 'em in Thought and in  
 Inclination; and that drew after it of  
 Course such mutual Caressings as are easier  
 imagin'd than express'd. We love our  
 Children, because Images of our selves;  
 and wherever a Likeness is discern'd, whe-  
 ther of Person or Disposition, Nature is  
 extremely taken with its own Reflection.  
 Accordingly God shin'd out toward the  
 Favourite Draught of his Divinity in all  
 the Sweetness and Complacency of ob-  
 liging Greatness, and he approach'd God  
 with all the Freedom and humble Fa-  
 miliarity of an oblig'd Friend. Blessed  
 Intercourse of Endearments! Delight-  
 ful to us in the Speculation, how much  
 more then to *Adam* in the Act, so delight-  
 ful that I know not how to turn off from  
 my Theme to any thing else. Blessed God!  
 That thou should'st be so liberal, not only  
 of the Creature, but of thy self too. The  
 bright Idea wou'd tempt one almost to wish  
 back Yesterday wherein our Nature was  
 thus honoured by the Divine; but since  
 that were a vain Attempt, it helps us how-  
 ever

ever to antedate the Joys of Futurity, when we shall be with God in Glory.

No wonder then the *Fa-  
thers* in a pleasing Rapture  
and Pang of Admiration  
thought and spake so great

*Moral Re-  
flections upon  
the whole.*

Things of *Paradise*. They might err  
a little in the Application of their  
Praises, but they did not at all as to the  
Ground and Foundation of them. The  
Place perhaps answer'd not perfectly the  
richest *Scenes* of their Fancies; but the  
Fruition there went far beyond 'em. As  
Heaven, the Ante-Type, consisteth not so  
much in external Glories as in the beatifick  
Vision of God.

No wonder *the Morning Stars sang toge-  
ther, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy,*  
upon beholding the new-made World that  
open'd at first in such amiable Light and  
Order, and new-made Man that was with  
such Distinctions of Privilege set over it.  
For their Happiness being finite as is their  
Nature, and so progressive, and consisting  
too in contemplating God, this new Scene  
by enlarging their Notions of the Divine  
Attributes enlarg'd their Happiness at the  
same time; and so they had the greatest  
Reason on their own Account to rejoyce up-  
on it: Tho' I doubt not but the sweet Genius  
of the Angels, Self-Interest aside, carry'd 'em  
out to congratulate the blest Inhabitants of  
Paradise.

Paradise. We also may be the better for't if we please; that is, be prepar'd thereby for an awful Submission and Acquiescence under the sad Inversion of Things that soon follow'd; I mean, the lamentable Blast upon all the Works of God and human Nature in particular. For hence we learn what the Goodness of God is, how generous and diffusive, when it pursues its own Inclinations, and that therefore when it does not do all the Good that is expected from it, 'tis because it has a Check from Justice, and cou'd not wisely do it. A River that has been seen to flow with the briskest Current, but now gently creeps, must have some more than ordinary Obstruction, or it wou'd do so still; Consequently its Stream is to be acquitted, and we must allow it to be naturally free nevertheless, tho' accidentally confin'd. So the *first* Blessings argu'd the Benevolence of the Divine Nature, and 'tis no ground for doubting it, that they were not perpetuated.

C H A P.



CHAP. II.

*The Law of Paradise, and Adam's  
Breach thereupon.*

**N**Otwithstanding the gracious stoops God was pleas'd to make, as it were, below himself in his first Communications with *Man*, a *Law* was soon impos'd to be a Remembrancer of the Distance still between Finite and Infinite, the Creator and the Creature: As Princes will not lay their Majesty quite aside that can yet draw it in upon Occasion. It runs thus: *Of every Tree of the Garden thou may'st freely eat; but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely dye.*

Now a *Law* of Kindness surely one shou'd account it, rather than of Severity, as setting against many Concessions but one Restraining, in effect none at all. For how cou'd a reasonable Being, judging by his Reason, think himself confin'd amidst such Liberty? Here Indulgence goes along with Duty, and the Prohibition derives a Sweetness from the gracious Overtures that introduce it. And art not thou, O happy Man, highly favour'd of the Lord, so sensible

22 *The Law of Paradise, and*

fible of thy Happiness as to make the Discharge of his Precept a Testimony of thy Gratitude? Thou art got too far in his Accounts to be able to quit scores with thy Benefactor; but thou wilt pay him what thou art able, so small an Acknowledgment. Had you been expected to do Service upon the bare Stock of Promises, *Faith*, such a *Faith as worketh* by Love, wou'd have become one that had tasted at least the Good of Being. Had the divine Interdict been laid upon all Enjoyments but one, that one indeed might be the less engaging for so much Self-denial, and there wou'd be some Pretence for flying out and stealing in Satisfaction to a straitned Appetite; yet that Pretence had not amounted to the Weight of a good Excuse. But thou art left more at large, even in the very Bosom of Affluence; a whole Paradise of Delights waiteth on thee, only a Tree excepted, and canst not thou want the Fruition of it without missing it, where such rich Materials are furnish'd out for thy Contentment? In such a case Forbearance sure must have a Mixture of something agreeable, and be equivalent even to Fruition, as an handsome Essay of filial Duty, shewing you in your true Perfection. But if the Comparatively small Reserve sits uneasy on thee, yet thou wilt not dare to throw it off: *For in the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely dye.* And Danger, I hope

hope, may check a childish Longing, where Ingenuity cannot. A Precept beset on one side with such Bounty, and on the other with such Menaces, methinks, shou'd have an Impression of this kind, or of that, please or terrify into Compliance. But it did neither; *Adam* Must try the tast of the forbidden Fruit; Will break thro' Endearments and Threatnings to come at it. *Sin*, instead of being discourag'd, took occasion by the Commandment to work in him all manner of Concupiscence.

And this is an hint for *A practical* remarking how in many *Reflection.* Cases no Reason can be given why a Man shou'd chuse some Ways, or do some Actions, but because they are prohibited. When God bid the *Israelites* rise and go up against the *Canaanites*, they wou'd not stir; the Men were *Anakims*, and the Cities impregnable. But, presently after, when God forbade 'em, they wou'd and did go, tho' they dy'd for't! *Solomon* presided over a numerous and a powerful People, and that in a deeper Calm, and in greater Glory than all the Kings before or after him: So that if State and the Pumps of Royalty cou'd make him happy, he stood possess'd of the Means and the End too. Nay, a Blessing seldom falling to the Share of crowned Heads, the Fame of Wisdom was added to augment this

this Happiness: Notwithstanding he wanted something else, even to *know Madness and Folly*. He must make wild Excursions after Mirth, and Wine, and Women in a farther Quest of true Happiness; and many evil Days pass'd 'ere he came off the guilty Ramble. *Haman*, by his own Confession, besides a lovely train of domestick Blessings, had the Ear and the Cabinet of *Ahasuerus*, consequently, Riches, Honours, Pleasures, every thing, yea, and Reason too 'to hope the continuance of them; yet *all this Grandeur, forsooth, availed him nothing*, the highest of Subjects, so long as a small Affront from the very meanest stood unrevenge'd! Thus prone are the Sons of *Adam* to take an Hint from God's withholding this or that to put themselves in mind of needing it, and to pick a Quarrel with their own Felicity! But 'tis not so very strange they shou'd take after their Father in Sullessness and Humour. Much stranger he shou'd give the scandalous Pattern, and being made the happiest, become the most dissatisfy'd Part of the Creation. If Happiness can have no better Usage than this, 'twere pity it shou'd be bestow'd. If when in hand it cannot engage to Duty, much less will it when in Prospect only: And what then will become of Religion, whose Motives at the strongest have so feeble an Impression.

## C H A P. III.

*The Serpent's Temptation, and what Use  
to make of it.*

**B**UT was there no Temptation in the Case? Did he Sin perfectly for sinning sake, or merely to try how far he was in God's Favour, and whether he could Sin himself out of it? No, there was a Bait held out for the unmistrustful, and an Hook behind it. In an evil Hour fallen *Lucifer*, to increase the Number of the miserable, sets upon the happy, and to vie with Heaven, opposes Flattery to Precept: As the Natural Serpent lurketh privily in the Hedge when he wou'd bite the Heel of any nobler Creature that passeth by. The Fruit that God had sealed up under the Character of Unlawful, shall be no longer thought so, if it be in the Power of good Words to insinuate easier Notions of it. And he begins his Attack, as we may gather from *Gen. 3. 6*, with Arguments from Sense to this Effect. "Behold its Loveliness and  
"inviting Charms, how it silently be-  
"speaks your Curiosity, and beckens to  
"you to come near and taste it. Bestow  
"a thankful Look upon what makes an of-



## 26 The Serpent's Temptation,

“fer of unknown Pleasure, and turn not  
“away from Blessedness.

*A practical Use.* **III** By the by, the artful Ap-  
plication carries a *Moral*

with it, and would warn us  
to place a close Guard upon the outward  
Man, to turn away our Eyes from beholding  
Vanity, and our Ears from hearkening unto  
Folly, to forbear looking on Wine when it  
sparkles, and on Beauty when it smileth.  
Not that the exterior Faculties are of them-  
selves any way criminal; for they discharge  
but the Law of their Frame, and are only  
true to their respective Offices. But they  
may and often do become an occasion of  
Sin to us, by fetching in Provision for  
Uncleaness or Delusion. A slip of the  
Eye is more dangerous than that of the  
Feet, and one Error in the Touch begets  
another in the Affections. It concerns us  
then to keep with all Diligence, not our  
Hearts only, but our Senses too. Were  
these Avenues well look'd to, outward Ob-  
jects wou'd pass by without staying for an  
Impression, and we shou'd become dead to  
the World while we liv'd in it.

But there was more in the Temptation  
than an Address to Sense. Reason had her  
Bribe too, and the Lure of Knowledge se-  
conded that of Pleasure. “Behold the  
“Tree is not only good for Food, and pleas-  
“ant to the Eye, but to be desired also to

“make

*make one wise.* It is a Mistake then that you are ty'd up from it. Possibly your gracious Creator had no such Intention. His Words sure will bear an otherguess Sense than what an ill-tim'd Fear, or a mis-plac'd Zeal have put upon them, and he will not thank you for the injurious Construction that casts such a Blemish upon his best Attributes: Or if this be his Meaning, 'tis a very unkind one, disproving him to be gracious. For how can it stand with Goodness to tantalize his Creature, to pretend more Bounty than is intended, to spread a Table of good Things before him, and then damp his Appetite with an Hitherto shall you go in obliging it and no farther. And what, tho' you may eat of all the Trees but one, why not of every one? If this be not design'd for Use, what does it here? Cut it down, why cumbreth it the Ground to your Vexation? But however, you need not be afraid of tasting it. His Cruelty cannot well rise higher than it has done by Denials, and by Threatnings. There is some great Good, no doubt, which he knows in it, and envies you a Share of, and by this cross Detention of one high Ingredient of Felicity, like one that had been bountiful only upon Surprize and Incogitancy, 'tis plain, he has retracted his original Design of

C 2      " making

28      *The Serpent's Temptation,*

“ making Man compleatly happy. He  
 “ therefore, out of a Fear of Rivalry,  
 “ wou'd beat you off with a Stroke of Au-  
 “ thority and an Awe of Vengeance. But  
 “ you are not bound in this hard Case to do  
 “ as he requires, nor he as he threatens.  
 “ Why shou'd not you that were made in  
 “ his Image, be *like* God in this also, *know-*  
 “ *ing good and evil?*

The Speech of the great Enemy of Souls thus paraphras'd is very instructive toward a Discovery of his Devices. It exemplifies his prodigious Subtlety, Conduct and Variety of Management in the Work of tempting Mankind. It is the common Practice of great Pleaders to suit the Method of handling to their Cause, and to their Audience. Thus if their Cause be weak, and will not bear plain and downright Reasoning, they offer not at it, and have a care in their first Address of coming close to the Business. They proceed tenderly and by Insinuation, with much Circumlocution and Contrivance shadow their main Drift and Purpose, and apply rather to the Affections than the Judgment. Such a one is *Satan's*, and therefore like them he fetches a compass about in order to disguise it. It was not likely a barefac'd Reflection on their Maker wou'd at first go down with the infant Creatures. For this Reason he wou'd seem at first to stand up for his Honour, and is contented

to lay the Supposal of a Restraint in point of Pleasure upon mere Mistake. And tho' the presum'd Mistake had not the Air of Compliment, there was what wou'd soften the Matter, the imputing it to high Strains of Duty and Observance. Afterwards having made way for't by a Pretence of Friendship and Concern for their utmost Satisfaction, he comes out with heavy Complaints against the Deity, as tho' he had an evil Eye toward the best Work of his Hands, and grudg'd 'em the Portion of Happiness that shou'd have fallen to them. He helps 'em too to remove the Commination that God set as a Fence about his Law, lest they shou'd break in and transgress it, by mollifying Constructions. And to give a Finishing to his Delusions, he is for putting Fallacies on them out of God's own Words; and whereas the *Tree of Knowledge* had its Name of God, as well perhaps from the Event of Sin foreseen, as from its Nature, he takes Advantage of that Name to represent the Knowledge of Good and Evil sure to follow upon tasting as a State of Perfection; conscious all the while that it wou'd be the Reverse, a State of Sorrow; that they wou'd know Good only by the Loss, and Evil by the Sense of feeling it.

But I cou'd not forgive my self if I mention'd not one *Circumstance* more, very considerable, in the Temptation, that of

### 30 *The Serpent's Temptation,*

the *Person* it was first address'd to. *Eve*, as being *Bone of Adam's Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh*, cou'd not but have a Share in his Heart too, and therewith an Influence on his Behaviour; and accordingly, no doubt, God intended him in her a kind of *second Conscience* for his Security. But then the Influence might be either way, as well for Enticement to Evil, as Attraction to Good. And therefore the Devil, that he might the better pursue his Designs on *Adam*, makes her his Tool to work by. I know, some assign the Weakness of the Sex, as the Ground of that Choice. But what Weakness cou'd there be in the Seat of Strength and Innocence? The Woman was no more liable to Seduction than the Man, but being seduc'd herself, she might help on his Seduction. This *Satan* was appriz'd of, and in the Event we may read his Policy.

And now what are all the Stratagems practis'd since on their *Posterity*, but the old set of Devices so many times repeated? The bringing Men out of Conceit with *Revelation* is his Master-piece. If he can but get us off from our surest Guide, the *Book of God*, and set us to reasoning, he is happy, and can deal with us well enough. We are soon run out of Breath and into Mazes, or led aside by Shadows and false Lights. He gives us plausible Colours for Demonstrations, and persuades us we see Reason, while



while he does but put a Cheat upon us with Appearances. Accordingly let any Man reflect on the Scheme of Principles which pass for Solidity and good Sense with our modern Free-thinkers in Religion, and he will see all the artificial Turnings and Windings of the old *Serpent* in them. Being under a preternatural Infatuation, they sling away their Bibles, and after they have tried the Force of Natural Reason in Matters of Religion, which are too high for it, till they are weary, they centre at length in Atheism.

But to trace him in Particulars: How oft do we hear such Flesh-obliging Language as this in the Mouths of those Wretches that fight on his side, and do his Business for him? *Hath God said, ye shall not Partake of every worldly Pleasure, every thing that Fancy can suggest, or Lust crave?* 'Tis natural to gratify Desire to the utmost, and what is so, must be lawful too. What are Objects and Appetites made for, but to meet lovingly, and create all the Delights that the one are capable of giving, and the other of receiving? Freely you have receiv'd, freely use and withhold not your Heart from any Joy, being assur'd withal, that you offend not God by pleasing your selves, But admit you did, the fault were not yours who made the most of Enjoyments, but him who administred them.

## 32 *The Serpent's Temptation,*

Eat then, and live, and be happy without stint or measure. This is plainly the grand Deceiver's Philosophy who loves to tickle our Sense for us, and can be as carnal to the full in his Reasonings, as we are in our Lives.

How oft again do such Thoughts as these spring up within us (and we little think who sits behind the Scene all the while, and is the Prompter.) Hath God said, *Ye shall dye Eternally*, for a short Life of Wickedness? What Proportion is there betwixt finite Transgressions, and infinite Punishments? Possibly then the Passages the latter are represented by, and Men commonly construe expressive of Eternity, are really not so, but denote some indefinite Period of Time after which, it may be, the damned cease to *Be*, or at least to be *miserable*. But if, interpreted up to rigour, they do threaten Everlasting Vengeance, it is but for threatning sake. The Execution will come short of that as your Demerits do. It cannot be but he will dispense with his Denunciations either in whole, or in part, as he sees occasion, *ye shall not dye Eternally*.

Farther, how oft do Men wrest, distort and bow the Scriptures, the Measure and Standard of all Truth and Rectitude, to their own vile Purposes of deceiving and being deceiv'd, hale Words from Sense and Context, rack and torture Passages to squeeze

squeeze what meaning they please out of them, or make 'em confess what they know nothing of, the most rank Absurdities. And may not this Humour of *perverting* be look'd upon as his Suggestion who gave the *first* Instance of it in his own Practice?

Lastly, how oft are near Relations and intimate Friends, set on work by an evil Dæmon (that acts unseen and in the dark) to inveigle us into Sin and Ruine? *Kindness* is made the Vehicle of *the Poison*, and the worst Proposals coming from such *dear* Hands, are swallowed in the Gross, without Scruple or Examination. Thus our *spiritual* Adversary trusts *still* to the *former* Ways of Seducement, as finding his account in them, plays the same Part over again every Day that he did in the Beginning, only the Scene is changed.

Before I dismiss this Argument, let me note two *Moral Uses*. Things. 1. The extream

Malignity of the *Grand Apostate*. When we view over the busie Temptation above-mentioned, with all its Circumstances, how he began it early, and push'd it on vigorously, losing no Time, sparing no Pains to execute it; one wou'd be apt to think some important Concern was depending, some Point of Weight was to be gain'd by it, at least, that he propos'd to

### 34      *The Serpent's Temptation,*

himself high Advantages thence, no less than the becoming absolute Lord of this World, and the ceasing to be a wretched Devil in the other, expected to retrieve the Error of the Field and Day he lost before, and by worsting Man, to grow a Match for God. But if we think again, we remember he is a *Spirit* still, in spite of his Apostacy, consequently too intelligent a Creature to be thus expecting, and that if his native Wisdom cou'd not check such wild Hopes, his dear bought Experience might. What then was it that set him thus on work to plot our Ruine? Nothing, Oh! nothing, but a fantastick preter-natural Complacency in Mischief, in that which might spread indeed his Plague, but could not at all relieve it. He cou'd not hurt God, he cou'd not ease himself, by hurting his Fellow-Creature, Man, and he knew all this too: Yet he wou'd hurt and damn him too if possible! Mischief he must do for Mischief sake; and he is in great *Wrath*, because he has so *short* a *Time* to do it in. The only lucid Interval for that vile Employ, is but till the Day of Judgment. For this he rages and bites his Chains of Restraint no less than he will those of Torment he is reserv'd for. Let not any then despise and over-look him as a Being they need not fear, thro' a Conviction that he has

no Temptation at all to be a Tempter. It seems he can act without one, where there's a Prospect or Opportunity of Evil; and to shew he can, he oft prevails with us to do so too. For which Reason neither shou'd we forget to move warily, in reference to Men of like Passions with our selves, and any Case, where we conceive they cannot hope to get by their Treachery and Delusions. The bare *Theory* of *Humane* Nature, I confess, while it considers it as Rational, will not allow it to be mischievous to no manner of Purpose. But alas! Speculation, if we trust to it too implicitly, will deceive us woefully. The World is not grateful enough to our charitable Schemes, but quite another thing from what we kindly draw it in our Closets. Step but out of them, and you may meet with Men (for the Credit of our Kind, I'll not suppose 'em many) that can go about the Devil's Work with the Devil's Malice, and secretly hug themselves upon the Vice, the Infamy, the Destruction of their Brethren. The Pleasure indeed of undermining Innocence, has no less of Mystery in it, than the Practice; yet there are those that can relish it, as the foulest Feeding delights most where the Appetite is out of Temper, and a Disease tastes for it.



### 36 *The Serpent's Temptation, &c.*

2. The wonderful Force and *Resolution* of *Envy* in the Person of *Lucifer*. How far he made use of the *Serpent* in his Temptation, we cannot tell; but this we are sure of, that it argued a very strange Talent of Dissimulation and Varnish, to manage it in Person. For while he persuaded *Eve* to reject the Truths of God, he *believed* 'em himself, he *trembled* at, and which is more, he felt 'em. And is it not amazing, that he cou'd thus put on an Air of Happiness, out-face experimental Convictions, and though a present Instance of God's Vengeance himself, pass an occasional Slight upon it? To argue against the reality of his own Condition, What was this but the perfection of hardened Impudence? How did he know but the Secret of his Doom might *providentially* break out the next moment, to his Confusion? But he cou'd risk that, and a great deal more, to carry on his Purpose. Man's Happiness disturb'd him, as much as his own Misery; and what wou'd not Envy attempt, to spight its Object? On this pressing Exigence, he cou'd, as 'twere, out-do himself, and disguise his dire Agonies, that they might not appear Witnesses against him, while he pleaded hard for Infidelity. A false Assurance was preserv'd all the while, and an affected Grandeur held up, the better to recommend

## *The Success of the Temptation, &c. 37*

mend and authorize his Illusions. It is no Impropriety then in \* *Milton*, to introduce the Leader of the *fallen* Seraphins, in a Posture of Bravery; nor yet to make this matter of Concern and Wonder (tho' not of Fear) to the good Angel that fought against him. Truth, as well as Poetick Licence bears him out. There is no greater Prodigy, it seems, than a *malevolent* Temper, and the Fruits that issue from it. It is enterprizing even where it is hopeless as to any personal Advantages that might accrue thereby, and can overlook Uneasiness at home, while 'tis taken up in blasting Propriety abroad. Wou'd to God therefore it had its Confinement where it found its Birth, among the Devils! our World would be bad and wretched enough without it.

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### CHAP. IV.

*The Success of the Temptation how to be improv'd.*

SUCH was the laborious Malice of the *Old Dragon* in his *first* Attempt on *Man*; but if we went no farther than

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\* *Paradise lost*, B. 6.

### 38 *The Success of the Temptation,*

bare Reasoning, in our Enquiries touching the Success, we shou'd allot him nothing for his *righteous* Pains but Baffle and Disappointment. For was not the Law he spighted too lately made to be yet forgotten or over-look'd? Was it not reasonable in it self, and like to be comfortable in the Observation? Was not the Subject of that Law too, lately made, and that after his maker's own Image, and one who had the Lower-World made for him? The Hosts thereof were not only *Obligations* to Obedience, but *Patterns* of it too, each of them *in their way* fearing God and regarding Man at the same time. Had he not Faculties pure and uncorrupt, and clear of all evil Tendencies? Had he any more than one Example of Sin before him, and was not that an Example likewise of Divine Vengeance? Had he not a constant Experience of the Divine Presence, the *very Eyes of his Glory*, to awe and govern him? Had he not the great Concerns of his Posterity on his Shoulders to make him walk uprightly and surely? Men, whom no Consideration of *themselves* can stagger in their Impiety, are yet afraid to undo their *Families*, and by that Fear, are restrain'd from Mischief.

The *Allurements* on the other hand, bore no Proportion to the *Checks* on this.

For

For what if an Advance to Angelical, or rather Divine Perfections were propounded, could a Creature but of Yesterday, make 'em his, by the Strengths of Nature? As well might a Clod of Earth hope to mount up to Heaven, and fix it self a glorious Star in the Firmament. What though some superior Spirit bore him in hand, he shoud not die for the Presumption, had not God said, *ye shall surely die*; and who deserved most to be believed, that *Stranger-Being*, or his Almighty Friend, 'tis easy to determine. All this surely was Knowledge enough to have kept his Eyes open on the *Abyss*, and to let him see whither *Satan* and Sin would carry him. Nevertheless, he set out upon the bold Adventure, to his Ruine; Grace cou'd not hold him in, when *Ambition* spur'd him on after *forbidden Glories*. An horrible Transgression this! *against Knowledge*, *against the coolest Dictates of illuminated Reason*, *against the Sense of infinite Obligations*, *against severe Warnings*, *against the Tenderneesses of Paternal Affection*, and a Regard to Posterity, *against*--- But why shoud I go on aggravating? It is a *Subject* indeed, that will bear a great deal of *Satyr*, but the spending much upon it, can be to no good purpose; neither wou'd I be thought to take delight in rubbing *old Sores*. We will therefore bring it

## 40 *The Success of the Temptation,*

it down from an Object of Speculation, to an Improvement of Practice.

Now first, It will serve  
*Moral Re-* for a *Dissuasive* against car-  
*fections.* nal Security and Self-con-  
*fidence.* Nothing doth more  
 endanger Innocence, than *Unconcerned-*  
*ness,* a strong Opinion that it is *out of*  
*Danger,* and yet this Conceit fastens on us  
 more easily than any, as flattering the Va-  
 nity of the Creature. Alas! we love to  
 walk upon Slippery Ground, and can play  
 on Battlements; yea, though every Day  
 Thousands fall besides us, and ten Thou-  
 sand at our Right-hand, we give no heed  
 or credit to the matter, till we are in the  
*Pit* our selves. A wretched *unthinking*  
*State!* And is there nothing to awaken  
 Men out of it? If *later* Examples of hu-  
 mane Frailty are not *cautionary* enough,  
 yet sure the *original* Miscarriage may be  
 so. For who would venture within reach  
 of the *Devil's* Chain, that remembers  
 what he did in *Paradise*? It was just rea-  
 soning, that of the *Elders of Israel* in *Jehu's*  
*case.* \* *Behold two Kings stood not before*  
*him, how then shall we stand?* And we  
 may well apply it to *this*: If the *primi-*  
*tive Couple* paid so dear for their Fami-  
 liarity with that *roaring Lion,* how dare

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\* 2 Kings 16.



we rouse and stir him up? If they could stumble formerly with the Advantage of a pure *Light* about 'em, what safe Footing is there for their Posterity now in the Days of *Darkness*? None at all, questionless, without an holy *Solicitude* and godly Jealousie over our selves, and an humble *Application* to God for his Protection. Had they done this, had they either not led themselves into *Temptation*, or pray'd to God that he would lead them out of it, trusting their Souls not a Moment but in His and their own keeping, they had not stood upon Record the *first* Instance of Transgression. But since they do, this *Advice* we should borrow from the black Register of their Infamy, not to expose our selves to be worsted by Temptation, thro' a vain and sanguine Presumption on our own Stedfastness. This perhaps was the very Rock those *well-built* Vessels split upon formerly; however their woful Wreck calleth out to us to keep aloof from it, as we tender the Blood of our immortal Souls.

2. The Nature of this *great Offence*, bid-  
deth us also look with *Distrust* and Dread upon our own *Perfections*, whether of Grace or Nature. For that it proceeded partly from *Pride*, or an over-weening Notion of inherent Excellencies, I think cannot be doubted. For indeed, it is not easily

## 42 *The Success of the Temptation,*

easily imagined what else should occasion it; in regard our first Parents were then in the full Perfection of Humanity; and though they carried Flesh about them, yet not such as had low Biasses and *Propensions*. But that might very well be supposed to have fool'd 'em into an Affectation of greater Heights in Glory. For finding themselves Lords of the lower World, and near of kin to the Upper in intellectual Endowments, they set up those Endowments as a meritorious Claim to higher still. And when they were once blown up, they were prepared to catch at any Pretence to vie with the Author of them. The Opinion of their own Desert out-topping their Enjoyments, they were easily tickl'd with the Fancy of becoming *Deities*. And the like may be said of *Lucifer* himself, that had he not been once an *Angel of Light*, he had hardly been now a *Devil*. The too high Value he set upon his Angelical Graces, made him set too low a one upon his Station. The flaming Spirit fell to doating upon it self, and then he cou'd not endure to be happy in that Order or degree of Dignity God allotted him, because not happy enough as he fondly imagin'd, in proportion to the Dignity and Grandeur of his Nature. Nothing therefore wou'd serve the bright Son of the Morning, but he must exalt his Throne above the Stars of God. And

And if these glorious Creatures were eventually the worse for being glorious; if the very Endowments that secur'd 'em from all Sin beside, laid 'em open to that of Pride, yea, the more for thus securing them; how should eminent Accomplishments in point of Knowledge or Morality, strike an Awe upon our Spirits, even whilst they cheer 'em, as a Precipice that equally exposes to Envy and to Ruine? Our Knowledge that is design'd to guide, without Care, will mislead us into Folly, and our best Morals betray us into *spiritual* Wickednesses, while they establish us against *carnal* ones. And can we then do otherwise than stand in fear of Both, as we would of Friends that flatter'd us? But half our Danger is apprehended, or rather the least part of it, when we look upon the World *without* us as our Enemy. As great a Devil may enter in thro' Prayer and Fasting, as is cast out by them: And to secure the noblest of Virtues, *Humility*, we must guard against not our *Vices* only, but our *Virtues* too, yea, against Humility it self, as what is sometime lost thro' a Sense that we have acquir'd it. Hard indeed is the Lot of Excellence! If the Food which is the Support of Life, can feed Diseases too, which tend to its Destruction, how precarious is our Being! If the Evil of Sin can spring  
up

#### 44 *The Success of the Temptation,*

up in *Eden*, can draw Nourishment from those very Actions which are innocent and praise-worthy, how tottering is our Innocence! Let Virtue look to her self, let great Attainments tremble.

3. From the supposed Ground of this *primitive* Transgression, I would take Occasion to warn against laying too great Weight upon the common Opinion, which may have a good Meaning indeed, but it has oftner ill Effects, *viz.* that *Man is the sole End of the Creation*. As to the Truth of it, I do not find that \* *Revelation* favours it any more than *Philosophy*. Indeed the Scripture tells us, *the Earth God hath given to the Children of Men*, consequently that it was created for them. Besides this, the *Angels* are said to be sent forth as *ministring Spirits*, to such as are *Heirs of Salvation*. But then we are nowhere told how far the Creation extends, much less, that *It* ow'd it self meerly to their Welfare and Convenience. For ought we know, there may be ten Thousand *spiritual* Words of Prodigy and Wonder; and who can say, the whole of that we know, is *actually* useful to us. The *Angels* that are said to be so, we are sure, are much *above* us; and 'twou'd be but an untoward Requital of their kind, tho'

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\* Boyle's *Disquisit. about final Causes*, p. 109.  
requir'd

requir'd, Condescensions to pretend they were plac'd so high only to proclaim our Worth, by stooping so low to serve us. Let us then, for Decency sake, drop the Lordly Language we have been used to, as tho' not only the Heavens, but the vast Orbs beyond 'em too were design'd only for the Service of Man. I confess He is sometimes depreciated too much, as when any Part of the \* *sensible* System is taken from him. But there will be Matter enough for *Praise* and Gratitude, without such proud complimentary Attributions to our own Nature.

But my chief Reason against them, is their probable *Abuse*. For if *Adam* seeming a God among the Creatures, affected to be one in *reality*; if he, exalted with his blest Nature and Condition, mounted above himself, and flew in the Face of Heaven, 'tis but too likely that we, upon over-straining ours likewise, shall sin after the Similitude of his Transgression: yea, we do so every Day, through an over-weaning Reflection on our Rank in the Scale of Beings. *First*, Because *Reason* is our peculiar, we grow big with the Talent, and when the Use of it shou'd be this especially, the *Thanking* God for that we have it, and many other excellent Uses for it;



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our vile Business is to turn it against the *Demon*, to set no Bounds to its Researches, and remonstrate that he has done so to its Discoveries. *Again*, Because we are the proper Center of Heaven's Care, and the *Charge* of Providence, we hence grow out of Patience therewith, if it does not attend every idle Motion and *Capriccio* of ours; and do This or That just as we order it. Nature must go backward to please our Fancies; Miracles come at call to satisfy our Doubts; the general Laws whereby the *whole* Universe is govern'd and directed, give way to promote our imaginary Concerns, who are but a small *Part* of it! And if such extraordinary Methods are not practis'd, we are neglected, forsooth, affronted, injured! The World then is not modell'd as it shou'd be, and God forfeits with us his Right to govern it. Here then is a Chain of absurd Thoughts, but the first Link is a wrong, a too lofty one, touching our Selves.

The Jews straitned the Notion of God's *Design* in the Creation yet more, and we see, in the *Apocryphal* History, their *Arguings* from it were as insolent as their *Doctrine* was false. \* *Thou madest the World for our sakes. As for the other People which also come of Adam, Thou*

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\* *Esd. c. 6. v. 55.*

hast said that they are nothing, but be like unto Spittle--- A Drop that falleth from a Vessel---- If the World be made for our Sakes, why do we not possess an Inheritance with the World? How long shall this endure! The high-flown Conceit produced very mannerly Expostulations. These haughty Sirs having first learnt to strain and skrew too high the *Distinctions* of God's Grace, cou'd presently take him to task, when the Course of Affairs run not smooth enough for them. As if the many Things he had done in their Favour, laid a Tie upon him to do every thing, and he must give an Account not only of his Justice but of his Bounty, too.

To prevent therefore such Incongruities of Thought and Behaviour, we will take truer Measures of our own *Nature* and *Pretensions*. We cannot forget indeed that we are the chief of *sublunary* Creatures, but still we must remember we are but Men. So will our Expectations shrink, and independent Schemes give place to Contentment and Resignation.

## C H A P. V.

*Apostate Adam and Eve brought to a Sense of their own Wretchedness, and how we may benefit by the Discovery.*

**T**HE immediate Consequences of the Transgression have all something very worthy of Remark in them.

*Their Intellectual Change.* It is said, *the Eyes of them both were opened.* How were they opened? To see as God seeth? To have an unconfin'd Prospect of all Things that had ever been and shou'd be, to gaze upon the order and manner of Heaven's secret Purposes, to peruse the obscure *Manuscript* of Everlasting *Destiny*, by which the World is govern'd and directed, and view the Motions of every Wheel in Nature; to behold *Futurities* as things actually present, and comprehend with *unerring Certainty*, the greatest and most *slippery Uncertainties*? All *this* and a great deal more the *Devil's* liberal *Promise* took in as little enough for such aspiring Souls. The Curtain of God's *Presence-Chamber* was to be drawn aside, the Cabinet of that Court rifled, and all its profoundest Secrets rip'd up to pleasure them! It was agreed, their Nature shou'd not

Adam and Eve brought to, &c. 49

not be exalted only (a thing Heaven might possibly one Day have afforded 'em) but alter'd too from Finite to Infinite, from Dependance to Self-sufficiency. In short, they shou'd be *as Gods, knowing Good and Evil*. But *nothing* of all this was made good to them upon fulfilling the *hard Condition*.

Their *Nature* indeed was alter'd, but infinitely for the worse, from *Glory* to *Imperfection*, from *Light* to *Darkness*. They *knew* more too, but not the blessed Counsels of Eternity, only what they wou'd willingly not have known, *God's Wrath*, and their own *Unworthiness*. They knew *Good and Evil*, not in Contemplation only, but by a sad Exclusion from the one, and Experiment of the other. They knew what it was to be *naked*, naked of every thing desirable, *Grace, Beauty, Innocence*; what it was to have a Judgment *blind*, a Will *perverse*, Affections *irregular*, and a Body *mortal*. They knew what *Diseases, Labours, Afflictions* are, what *Death, Judgment, Damnation* mean, without knowing the means how to shift off those, or prevent these. In a word, they knew not *as Gods*, but *Devils*. These, these, were their *big Attainments*, these, their *comfortable Discoveries*. But I shou'd think 'em not worth the making. 'Twere better much to be *ignorant* of a Disease, than to

50 Adam and Eve brought to

catch it. Silly Man acted like one who must needs take Poison to know its Strength, or puts himself to Pain to be convinc'd of its Reality. They thought no doubt as we do upon a view of their sad Case. But when the Hook is once swallow'd, there's no swimming off. They aggravated the Rashness of their Desires, and Actings to their Understanding, but to no manner of purpose, except that of their Punishment.

But we may make our Advantage of their Knowledge, tho' they cou'd not, and learn thence for our Caution.

1. The real *Emptiness* of criminal Enjoyments.

What with Sin's own *Inchantments*, and the *Insinuations* of the Devil backing them, we are strangely credulous and imaginative in its Favour, we are continually making kind *Suppositions* about it, such as these; *How well 'twould be with us, how finely we shou'd enjoy our selves, if we might but take it lovingly into our Embraces.* 'Tis all Charm and Loveliness, and the *secret* of Felicity is thought to be kept from us, while we are debarr'd it. But let the Devil perform what he promises, and Sin what it pretends to. Alas! we must excuse 'em; their *rich Overtures* being calculated for nothing, but to keep up the Expectation of easy *Fools* for the present, and balk



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balk 'em in the Issue. The one was a *Liar* from the Beginning, and the other a *Cheat*, presenting Men always with *false* Perspectives to make what is superficial appear solid and substantial. *Adam* found 'em so to his Sorrow. He had been as *credulous* as we can be, and as expecting to the full. He made the most of his bright Fancy in drawing the *forbidden* Apple to Advantage. So that his large Inventory of good Things seem'd imperfect still without it. He must eat of *all* the Trees of Paradise, or (as the officious Confident persuaded him) he shoud not have scope enough for his Satisfaction. And pray, how did the Project answer? Did it make up the lamented Deficiencies? Why, in seeking to make himself more happy still, he became very miserable, and for an *imaginary* Paradise exchang'd a *real* one. After this we hear no more of the generous Undertaker. He had done his own Bus'ness, tho' not *Adam's*, and so, as Flatterers do when the Person they pretend to love so passionately is falling, run away from the Ruins of his Greatness. Let but your Thoughts follow him into his dark Abodes, and you may find him sporting himself hugely with Man's Credulity and Weakness.

And can the Pleasures of Sin be bewitching still? Can we trust 'em again under the Sense of our Forefather's Disappointment

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and *important* Loss? His Experience sure may do for satisfying us that *all that cometh is Vanity*. But take notice I am speaking only to the *Pleasures of Sin*. For Pleasure in general is not blameable; nor yet the Pleasures of *Sense* absolutely. Pleasure (tho' still of the highest kind) is the *Happiness* of the *Deity*; and the desire of Pleasure, so low as sensitive, was natural even to *unlaps'd* Humanity. Otherwise how cou'd a sensitive Object have taken hold of it so unfortunately as it did? And far be it from me to set Revelation at odds with *pure* Nature. My Intention is only to undeceive such as fancy there is no Pleasure nor worth in any but *forbidden* Fruit, and to direct them to other Trees in the *Garden* that are certainly as good for Food, and perhaps as pleasant to the Eye, however more secure, and consequently more pleasant in the Taste. If we are wise, Religion shall carve for us for the future, and where it bids us stop in the Chace of Happiness, we will not move a step farther. It is enough to have lost one Paradise. *Heaven* is the only Bliss in reserve now, and therefore it concerns us infinitely not to forfeit or come short of it.

2. The Danger of *Curiosity* after Knowledge.

I wou'd not be thought to condemn Curiosity as a thing *simply* unlawful. For then I shou'd

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 53*

I shou'd condemn God my Maker that planted it in our Constitution. It is an *innocent* Passion and a *serviceable* one too, if duly moderated and rightly applied. But here lies the mischief; upon these very Accounts, no Passion is more liable to Excess and Misapplication than *this*. *Eve*, you see, reach'd out her Hand to the *Fruit* that lay under a divine Interdict, *because it wou'd make one wise*, as she was told. She stepp'd out of the Way of God's Command to seek out Wisdom, upon a persuasion possibly, that having once got it for her Guide, she shou'd ever after keep to the right way infallibly, without any fear of missing it more; the *Devil* all the while looking on demurely, and with much gravity suggesting, there was no avoiding *Evil* but by first knowing it. This Delusion welcom'd the fallacious Tender, and the Poison that was so finely gilded over; went glibly down for the sake of its rich Completion. *Solomon* too, with the same view, acquainted himself with *Folly* \*. He wou'd be mad for an Experiment; he *withheld not his Heart from any Joy*, hoping to keep so much Wit all the while, as to be able to weigh his Enjoyments, and to see once for himself, and for us all *what Good there might be in such a Life for the Sons of Men*. His

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\* *Eccles. ch. 2.*

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Bus'ness, as he wou'd persuade himself and others, was that of a *Philosopher*, not *Voluptuary*, rather Speculation than-Self-Indulgence. He smelt to every Flower in the Field of Pleasure; but the World was to be the better for't; his Experiments were to be of Use to Posterity, as a standing Verdict or Decision in resolving them touching their Emptiness and Vanity (for *what could he do that shou'd come after the King, so great and so wise a King in that Enquiry?*) And this publick Piece of Service was his Plea for what he did with his own Conscience, the *Opiate* that serv'd to quiet it.

In like manner *we* wou'd know as God; foresee as God, wou'd be in his Cabinet, and in his Throne, marshalling his Decrees, and comprehending his Mysteries; 'tis well too if we don't apply to the Devil to help us to this Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge: And we *likewise* have a colour, a *salvo* for this inordinate Desire. If such Knowledge might but be obtain'd, how wou'd it inspirit *Duty* and justify *Faith*? But before we venture any farther in such free Pursuits after hidden Things, let us see how it far'd with the *religious Virtuoso's* that went before us.

One in *St. Austin*, accounting for the Employment of God before the making of the World, says. *He was preparing an Hell for the Inquisitive.* But leaving that Conceit to

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 55*

to shift for itself, we know his Severities upon them since. *Eve* was in a great Measure Wise, till that lawless grasping after Wisdom judicially besotted her. In catching at the Shadow, she dropt the Substance, and the Evil of Knowledge quickly brought her to the Ignorance of Good. The way to Glory, Honour and Immortality that lay open before, is now hid from her Eyes; and she has hardly any thing left to distinguish her from the *Horse and Mule that have no Understanding* at all, but the bitter Apprehension of what she has unfortunately lost, and what she has foolishly done. *Solomon* in his critical Search bewildred himself, *stumbled on the dark Mountains*, fell into *Apostacy* from God: And tho' his *licentious Enquiries* are set up as a charitable Seamark to After-ages, we are not to thank the *Libertine* for this, but the *Penitent*, or rather the *Divine Providence*.

And now shall we hazard our Souls, as they did *theirs*, to inform our Judgments? And perhaps too no Information follows. For 'tis observ'd of such as pry into Secrets they have nothing to do withal, that they entangle themselves in inexplicable Mazes and Confusion, and instead of acquiring a more superlative Knowledge, in the Dust that they raise, lose those easy and common Notions, which escape not the most *Illiterate*. But what if, by digging for out-of-the-

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way-Truths, some Discoveries are fetched up, the *Treasure* perhaps is as useless as the manner of coming by it is unlawful. *Vain Man would be wise, tho' born like the wild Ass's Colt* : O that we truly were so, that is, less *inquisitive*, but more *devout* ! It would turn to much better Account, I'm satisfied, if Men would do as the Church directs, *learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar Tongue.*

In relation to some Points, such as the *Mysteries* of Iniquity, there is a discreet, a learned, a profitable Ignorance. The being let into those ugly Secrets does but tend to *stain* the Imagination, and teach us to Sin the more skilfully : As 'tis a great Chance indeed if a Man turns Philosopher upon viewing a lewd Picture, where the Colours are glowing, and the strokes masterly.

As to *other* Subjects, namely, such as look toward *judicial* Astrology, they, if not *unlawful*, are yet *vain*, and oft introductory to what is so, I mean, *Diabolical* Correspondencies. They stand upon weak and precarious Principles, and produce but idle GuesSES at the best. The Book of *Destiny*, alas ! is wrote in an *Hand* that can never be *learnt* by us.

As to a *third* sort, such as the *divine* Nature and Attributes, they are enough, because  
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best known by the modest Reflection of the *first* Thought. God wou'd be a very *little* Being himself, were he comprehended by such as are so. We shou'd have no desire to know what God has no will to reveal; and what he has reveal'd, we shou'd be forward to know so much of as we can by the help of the Revelation. In short, in pursuing true Knowledge, he is gone a good way, who knows whence to set out, and when to give over.

And let me add one Reason more for *Acquiescence* under present Allowances in point of Knowledge, *viz.* That nothing more entitles to *greater* Degrees of Knowledge than the being contented with *less*. 'Tis like *Eve* had been allow'd at last her Fill of *Wisdom*, if she had improv'd the Denial into a Ground of Submission for the present. For we can't suppose, the *Tree of Knowledge* was planted only for a Temptation, and withheld merely to raise an uneasy Desire. No, considering that nothing but what is good can proceed from God; and nothing that is good but may be hop'd for from him, we must conclude, it was planted also for the highest Improvement of her knowing Faculty, had she waited God's *Season* (*in which every thing is beautiful*) and withheld also to set a value on the Blessing in *Reversion*. But when by an hasty Step she endeavour'd to pluck it thence before it was ripe for her

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(or she for that) as if she were able to help the Providence of God with Devices of her own, a Curse came in its stead; she got the Fruit indeed that was to make her wise, but found not herself made the wiser by it, except in that ungrateful Instance of seeing her own Folly.

But whatever wou'd have been her Lot in case of Modesty and Contentment, we are sure we shall be Gainers by them in respect of Knowledge. If we can but stay the leisure of *Divine* Wisdom (which loves not to be hastned) we shall know *hereafter* whatever is conceal'd from us *here*, and the Requisite of their being so conceal'd; know in particular all the hidden Virtues of the *Trees of Life and Knowledge*, as being fully possess'd of both; know our selves as judging no longer by the false Lights of Sense and carnal Interest; know *God* himself as *seeing him face to face*; know every thing *even as we are known*. And who wou'd not wait the time appointed of the Father for a Treasure so various and so excellent. His Time is most certainly *best*, tho' *late*; yea *because* so. For had we *that* on Earth which is to be our Crown and Reward in Heaven; thro' such an Anticipation, Heaven wou'd be no Heaven to us, that is, no State of *new* and untasted Joys. In the mean while, since our Minds will be soaring upwards as naturally as the Sparks themselves,

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selves, and are alway fir'd with a desire of being like the most High, it must be our endeavour to direct that Desire to its proper Object, *his moral Perfections*. So there will be a Virtue in *Ambition*, and the *most* of Names prove the *best* of Things. As for affecting a Likeness with God in *Power*, or in *Knowledge*, there is Vanity, it seems, in the Inclination, there is Danger in the Attempt. The only *safe* way of gratifying so high a Thought, the only *sure* way of attaining so glorious a Resemblance, is to copy out the *Holiness* of the divine Nature into our own. And in this respect we cannot aspire too much, we cannot improve too fast. What a blessed Thing *would* it be if we cou'd kindle into *Seraphins* even in these colder Regions? What a blessed Thing *will* it be to *awake up after his Likeness*, and be *satisfied with it*.

3. The *Apprehensions* of Men consequent on the Commission of *Sin* and Folly. When our Progenitors were about to close with the Proposal that bore so hard upon them, they might have found *Dissuasives* in abundance, if they had but sought out for them. They might have considered the Name of the *Tree of Knowledge* (if it then bore that Name) as signifying to them, that as now while they stood upon Terms of Obedience with their Creator, they knew nothing but Good, so at what time soever they did trans-

gress his Commandment, they shou'd begin to know nothing but Evil. They might have argued from the *Goodness* of God which flow'd so freely toward them, that if there were any Fitness in the thing denied for improving their Happiness at present, it had not been denied them, and that therefore there must needs be some Cheat in the *Proposal*; from the *Veracity* of God, that if the Precept were violated, he wou'd let his Vengeance loose upon them, as he had threatned; from the *Judgments* of God already inflicted on *offending* Creatures, that it was fearful to fall into the hands of an *incens'd* Deity, as that *Precipice* is shivered at, whose bottom we see strewd with the mangled Carcases of many that have fallen thence; from the Condition of *Apostate* Spirits that they cou'd not but behold, with grudging, what *they* enjoyed, and for that envious Reason, cou'd not but practice upon them all the Methods of Art and Insinuation, yea, and *outward* Allurement too, to render them as wretched as themselves. These *Reflections* ought to have lain uppermost in the Soul to keep them to their good Behaviour, and cause the Preference of a *certain* Command to an *uncertain* Suggestion. On the contrary, the Senses and Mind were taken up together, and what they saw was *pleasant* to the Eye, they wou'd judge *innocent* in the Use. But when *they* had transgress'd, their Eyes were open'd



*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 61*

open'd to see the Horror of the *Fact*, and they stood amaz'd that they were not so before, to see the Horror of the *Temptation*. Now they cou'd say within themselves, (I mean as looking for Judgment and fiery Indignation, not as cordially concern'd for their Offence against infinite Love and Goodness) What was it, O my Soul, oh! what that carried thee on the side of Vanity! Now every Reflection they make, is a bitter Invektive against themselves, and their luscious Relishes recoil upon them in many a sickly *Qualm* and Convulsion.

And what are the *Sentiments* of all other Sinners, but lively *Transcripts* of this *Case*. In the Heat of their wanton Chase, some Profit or Pleasure in View, carries 'em out of themselves after it, and they must not stay to drop one sober Thought, for fear of a Diversion. But the Lust once gratified, the Tumult and Hurry of Delight over, they recover their Sight which before was dazzled; *Conscience* awakes upon them, and they have nothing else to do, but to attend to its Lashes and Remorses. Their Folly stares 'em in the Face in all its naked undisguised Uglinefs, and the Paint drops off when Satan has had his End, who clapt it on to deceive them; and they know not how to look off it, as little as they can bear it.

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Now tho' this *Disabuse* of Imagination comes with the latest to save 'em the cold Damps, and the angry Twitches of a self-condemning Breast, yet it may be of Benefit to them in regard of their future Conduct, if they will but fore-arm their Minds against Temptation, with this settled Persuasion, that Sin can please no longer than while it is committing, and leaves behind a Sting in the *Review* too sharp to be only a Countervail for that Pleasure.

Again it is said, *When they knew that they were naked, they sew'd Fig-leaves together and made themselves Aprons.*

The *Divine* Life fell off apace, and the *Animal* one was awakened in them. A *sinful* Concupiscence they now found working in their Members, and they were no more able to give it the least Check, than a *deserted* Prince with his single Person, can quell an unruly *Faction* pressing hard upon the Gate of the Palace. All that natural Conscience could do with regard to the brutish Scene, as being stript of Grace and Authority, was only to look on and weep. This is here (in a chaste and modest Dialogue very usual with Scripture) chiefly referred to; and it shou'd seem, the Scense of this inward Nakedness put 'em upon providing

\* See Pool's Annot. and Ainsworth in Loc.

*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 63*

a Shelter for the outward. Their Innocence kept 'em in Countenance before; but having thrown it up, they have nothing left to credit them. Hence all Value for themselves is at an End; they spend a Blush upon every thing about 'em, and are ashamed of their very Nature. Degeneracy is legible in their Faces, yea, and that Clouting too, which was intended to hide, betrays it.

Here then is the Meanness of Vice in the Original! Moral Reflections. It sets up indeed for Reputation in the World, and to this end steals creditable Names, Epithets, and Characters: But for all that, let any Body compare Fallen Man with his first Estate, and he needs no more to convince him, that It has something very poor and reproachful in it. During that, he was chearful, assur'd, significant; while the Crown of Integrity rested upon his Head, he did, he look'd, he spake as one that carried something very great about him, even the Perfection of Majesty and of Glory; his very Aspect told he was to go for much, and his Soul as it were, sparkled thro' the Body. But no sooner had he ate the sinful Morsel, than his Figure sunk, and his Spirits fail'd him. He and his Companion are thrown quite out of Consideration, even with themselves, thro' a Consciousness

scioufness of Mismanagement; and know not which way to turn for Shelter from Infamy. If they cast an Eye backward, there they see lost Perfections; if forward, everlasting Contempt; if upward, a Deity that abhors them; if on each other, a base Accomplice in Folly; if on themselves, a sad Spectacle of Shame and Misery. Under this Distress of Thought, tho' no Eye on Earth sees 'em but their own, they hang down the Head, droop and sneak, as if they were never to lift it up again. And does not *this* set out Sin as odious with an *Emphasis*? But if you want *farther* Proof, *answer* me, whence is it that it will not have any Witness, if possible, not so much as an Inferior, a Servant, a Child, a Fool, always begs the thickest Curtains of Disguise and Darknes may be drawn over it, and is most easy, when it is most private? If it cou'd endure the *Test* of Day-light, why does it make for the *Covers* of nightly Shades? If it were fit, why so unwilling to be seen with its proper Face about it? If not self-condemn'd, why so earnest to avoid the Eye of every Body, as well as of those that have not Power, Courage, or Understanding enough to condemn (that is, need not be feared for any thing but their Vertue or their Innocence) as of those that have? 'Tis the Nature of *Monsters* only to keep out

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 65*

out of common View. In the *Desert* where they are born, there they continue, unless sought for out of it, as if conscious the Wildness and Obscurity of the Place best suited them.

Whence, again, is it that it is *disown'd* by many, *hated* by more in their retired and best Thoughts, and *excused* by All; that it never goes for a Complement, or enters a Panegyric; that the most profligate, when they wou'd effectually reproach a Man, upbraid him with it, and not with any of his Vertues, and yet are so angry if upbraided with it themselves? If it be Great and Manly, why not an Ingredient in handsome *Characters*, and a Title of *Honour*: If Brave and Heroick, why has it not Trophies rais'd to it, and its Memory perfum'd with Praises? Alas! we might as suitably guild *Excrements*, as aggrandize Vice. The *Stink* in either case wou'd soon get the better of the *Varnish*. It is all Scandal and Deformity, and treated as such by all Mankind. The *carnal* Soul that bows down to it, must not hear the Idol named; as he that labours of a *Sore*, is still careful that his Wound be not touch'd. Yea, the *Devil* himself we find is not much in love with his own Character, nor Shape neither. He has so oft appear'd like an *Angel of Light*. When this foul Brat of his first entered the World,



World, and had but half its Meannesses discover'd, it look'd monstrous even to it self: But the Experience of Ages, by a thorow Inspection, has added much to the Frightfulness of the Idea. And were but Mens *Wills* as honest as their *Understandings*, it wou'd want a Being.

But 2dly, This little *Circumstance* in *Adam's* History of sewing *Fig-leaves* together, immediately upon his Transgression, may be fitly applied to the Correction of modern Vanity in relation to *Apparel*. 'Tis sad to see how sober *Nature* is abused and over-burthen'd by the Fooleries of *Art*. There is nothing wherein Men are observ'd to be so curious and so expensive as in the Matter of Dress and Equipage. They will rob the *Bowels* and *Backs* of all the Creatures to enrich their own, and when they have done so, they *bless* themselves with as much Solemnity as if they wore an *Heaven* about them, and were wrapt up in *Beatitude*. But to mortifie their affected *Gaieties*, let me tell 'em, *Cloaths*, how fine soever in their kind, are but coarse in their Causes and *Extraction*, and that if they go now for Marks of *Dignity*, they were once so of *Reproach*. Man in his first, that is, his best Estate \* was naked, and was not ashamed. His Body

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\* Gen. 2. 25.

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 67*

then knew no Dishonours, and consequently no want of a Covering. This was a *Necessary* not of his *Being*, but of his *Fall*. He sinned himself into it. He drop'd his *native Dress* of Innocence, before he call'd for an *Artificial* One. And now is the Effect of Guilt to be doated on? Shall we be *proud* of that which was another's *Humbling*? which bespeaks us *fallen* Creatures? As well might the *Beggar* look big in those Rags to which his Negligence and *Profuseness* have reduced him. Can we make it a Piece of Respect to Nature, to deck and flutter, and yet remember that she was happiest, when most like her self, in her original *undisturb'd* Simplicity? Besides, † *Adam* was contented with such a Cover as the Excrements of Tress help'd him to. He look'd not beyond the Ends of Decency and Convenience. If his (now) *uncomely Parts* were but hid, his Business was done. And when *the* || *Lord God* cloathed him, the Provision still came short of *Gayety*. And now if the guilty Occasion of Cloaths were not regarded, yet, methinks, the *first* Example shou'd, so far at least as to cut off all unmanly Solicitudes in this Article of *Oeconomics*. I have no Quarrel at all to Distinctions in Habit, any more than to those in Fortune, because I

do not find the Scripture has any. Our Lord seems to own it for the Privilege, while he mentions it as the Custom without Censure, of *Kings Courts to wear soft Raiment*. Nor were it difficult to shew, besides a Lawfulness in *occasional Pomp and Shinings*, a politick Necessity for them too. The Fault is only, when the *upper Part* of the World, too much proclaim or over-flourish these Distinctions, and the *inferior* sort break in upon them by a ridiculous Profusion. And 'tis to such as these I wou'd read a Lecture of Humility, by minding 'em of former Things. Consider then ye *Vain and Delicate*, that are alway taking anxious Thought, and saying, *wherewithal shall we be clothed?* Consider a little, wherewithal the Loins that begat, and the Womb that bore you and all Mankind, were cloth'd. If the primitive *Drapery* does not please you, I beg however, the *Ornament of a meek and lowly Spirit* may, which is in the Sight of God and Men, of great Price. Let the Rudeness of *Adam's Dress*, admonish you to consult Sobriety in yours: And no longer shew a moral Nakedness, while you hide a Natural.

Farther it is said, when *Their Horror* they heard the Voice of the Lord walking in the Garden in the Cool of the Day, Adam and his Wife hid themselves

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness.* 69

*selves from the Presence of the Lord among the Trees of the Garden.* What's the Matter that they who were so accustomed to the *Divine Presence*, from the Moment of their Creation, as much as in them lieth, avoid it now as if the *Bugbear* of human Nature? Did *the Lord God*, the *second Person* of the *ever blessed Trinity* (\* as he was concluded to have been by the *Antient Church*, as well *Jewish* as *Christian*) come in a *Fire* devouring before him, or with a *Tempest* stirr'd up round about him? The *History* does not say so. He convers'd under an *humane Shape* with the *Patriarchs*, and it may be conjectured from the Account of his *walking in the Cool of the Day*, he appear'd in as familiar a one to them in *Paradise*. Was his *Voice* at which they trembled, that of *Thunder*? We cannot tell. The *Greek Word* *own* (in the *Septuagint*) will bear a softer Construction. But still it must be own'd, some of the best † *Interpreters* do suppose a *Change* in the *Divine Addresses*, that God drew out all the *Artillery* of *Heaven*, and put *Force* and *Vehemence* into his *Expression*. But if the *Scene* were of this kind, why shou'd it be attended with grating Impressions upon the *Favourites* of *Heaven*, and

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\* See *A. B. Tenison on Idolatry*, c. 14. pt. 3.

† *Bp. Patrick on the Place.*

the *Heirs* of Blessedness? Indeed it had not, had but they continued such still. But alas! they were now become *naked*, naked in the worst Sence, that is a *spiritual*, disrob'd of their native *Righteousness*, and liable to all the Effects of God's Displeasure, and as one of them afterwards relates his own Case, they became *afraid* of every thing that betoken'd God's Approaches, because they were so. That is, an evil Conscience unqualified 'em for a Converse with their Maker, as an holy God, or an Appearance before him, as a just Judge they were to account to for their Behaviour. They were ill provided against *Interrogatories* and could not abide the Test of a particular Examination. To report their Conduct had been to lay themselves open to Censure, Tribulation and Wrath. To face the Light, had been to publish the Lameness of their Condition. They therefore withdraw under the faint Shade of Trees, as if to hide thereby their Nakedness and their Disobedience together from the All-searching Eye of God himself. An odd Piece of *Management* this! But ne'er the less *instructive* for being so. For,

Practical Reflections.

1. It represents the *Poor-Spiritedness* of Guilt to the Life. They were easie, as long as they were innocent, feeling

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness. 71*

feeling nothing reproachful from their own Minds, they apprehended nothing terrible from their God. Their Access to him, whom their Souls loved, was alway sweet and ravishing, and they found by seeking his Face continually in all the Methods of spiritual Communion, that they even added one Paradise to another. But lo! the *Reverse* of this followed upon Sin, Amazement, Restlessness, Confusion. *Now* instead of courting heavenly Intercourses, they fly from God, and wou'd, if 'twere possible, from their very selves: *Now* instead of bringing themselves within distance of receiving refreshing Influences from the *Sun of Righteousness*, they seek to get afar off his Rays, lest they be scorched by them. Like Frogs, they (once the fair Children of Light) creep together into Holes and Darkness, and when a *formal* Citation fetches 'em out again, they bring their Fears with them, and their croaking too.

Thus *faint-hearted* were they under the heavy Sentence already pass'd upon 'em from *within*. The *Signals* of God's Approach, whatever they were, I presume, had the least Part in the Discomposure. However, their frail and offending Children, have no Reason either to mock or wonder. If God manifests himself to them  
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by any overt Expression of his Power, tho' but with a kind Meaning, and that known too, Nature is over-set, Mortality cannot stand the shock. Witness the shrinking of \* *Isaiah*, at one Display of the Divine Glory, and of † *Daniel* at another. A Beam of *Christ's Divinity* breaking forth on *St. Peter*, was too much for him, so as to draw out this repulsing Speech || *Depart from me, for I am a sinful Man, O Lord.* And a *Vision* of the Word from Heaven, we know, threw \* *St. John* into a Swoon. Besides, that such *Flashes* of Majesty and Brightness, were very wonderful and surprizing, the Consideration also of what Men had deserv'd at the Hands of Justice, made them come with double Force upon them. God's faithful Spy in their Bosoms call'd up there more dreadful *Apparitions* at the same time, and every departed Sin reviv'd again to trouble 'em.

Nor is a *Retrospection* upon Miscarriage void of Sharpness and Disquiet, where it has not such suspicious Discoveries from the other World to help out the Impression. There is no need of them for our Disturbance; we find Phantoms enow of our own raising. When a Man is not

\* *Isa. 6. 5.* † *Dan. 10. 17.*

|| *Luke 5. 8.* \* *Rev. 1. 17.*

pleas'd with the Course of his Actions, the *benighted* Traveller's sad Case that has lost his Way, is only short of his. All the Regions of the Soul are overcast; his Thoughts ever gloomy and misgiving, as uncomfortable as an *Ignis fatuus* is to the other, whose horrid Light serves not to guide but to scare the Wanderer. He lets his Mind loose to dark Jealousies and Forebodings, and so almost all the Possibilities of Danger haunt it. He sits in Judgment on himself, upon every uncommon Accident, prophesying Evil to himself from it, and the less ordinary Effects of Nature to be sure, come charg'd with the Sentence of Destruction. Nay, a Word, a Noise, thro' a suspicious Gloss of Application, shall alarm him, and he stands in awe of his own Shadow, yea, his very *Memory*. If Weariness in Iniquity does not close up his Eyes and Thoughts, *Midnight* is a busie Time with him. On a sudden the Unwelcome Idea of Sickness, Death, or Judgment dogs him, and he tumbles up and down as tho' he meant to rowl away from his Imagination. He dares not think of beholding the Face of *offended* Majesty. This Wildness of Look and Behaviour therefore is never so much upon him as when he feels himself in the Bed of languishing, approaching towards it. Then perhaps such doleful Accents as

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these, 'O God mighty and terrible! How  
' shall I escape thy Presence, or how stand  
' before it! Come then ye *Rocks and fall*  
' upon me, and ye *Mountains cover me from*  
' the Wrath of the Lamb, and of him that  
' sitteth upon the Throne. His Soul quivers  
on his Lips, his Heart throbs and thrills  
within him, to reflect whither he is go-  
ing, and what will become of him for  
ever. You have an excellent Description  
of such a one's Anguish and secret Pangs in  
the *Book of Wisdom*, Ch. 17. Fancy by the  
Help of its blackest Images and Colours,  
could not dress out the Scene with more  
horrible Advantage.

But to give a few Instances: The  
Wretch of *Malsbury* could not trust  
himself with Solitude and Darkness: If  
his poor Candle did but go out, all the  
Courage of his Soul went after it. *Obscu-*  
*rity* awaken'd, as it does the Stars, his na-  
tural Notions of *Spirits*, and for the time  
he stood confuted by invisible Terrors, in  
spight of the Philosophy he advanced a-  
gainst them. 'Tis the \* *Philosophers* Ac-  
count in Tully of *Epicurus*, that he knew  
not any that was more afraid of the very  
things, which he affirmed himself were not  
to be feared, Death and Vengeance. The  
Story of † *Caligula* is in every Body's

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\* Cicero de Nat. Deor. Lib. 1. † See Sueton.  
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Mouth, how easily he was dispirited. A Flash of Lightning cou'd not be sent from Heaven, but it must be upon the sitting Errand of blasting him; and every Thunder pointed full at his guilty Head. But as the Terrors of Guilt are understood by none so well as those that have felt 'em, let him that would understand 'em perfectly without feeling 'em at all, muse a while upon the Circumstances of *\*Tiberius*, who, in a *free* Letter to the *Senate* of *Rome*, open'd the inward Bleedings of his Heart, with such Language of Distraction, as might have set even those a weeping *once* for Pity, that had wept before *too oft* for the sad Effects of his Tyranny and Injustice. It seems, being hagg'd and scar'd by the Night-mare of angry Thoughts, he took Comfort in nothing, not in the most flattering Courtships of the World, nor yet in a Retirement from them. The one did but set the Sins he committed by their means, a glaring upon the Imagination; and the other did but give Scope, Liberty, and Leisure to dark Reflections. So fullen and obstinate a thing is Guilt, that it must lie poring on its ugly self, without End or Measure. Nay, whereas there is an inbred *Greyness* in human Nature that makes it not care to confess its own Weaknesses, he had given up even that, and cou'd not



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help making the World a Witness to the Screiches of his Conscience. Notwithstanding I doubt not he was as hard put to't to describe as to bear them, and his Words cou'd not reach the Sadness of his Condition.

The *Inference* then is natural, that we take Sanctuary in *Religion*. It is, we're sure, the best Guard in the World, and that of our *Minds* too as well as *Persons*. Timorous Apprehensions never proceed from it, are hardly consistent with it. It therefore disowns the *Coward*, while it protects the *Weak*. The *Righteous* is as bold as a *Lion*, and he has Cause enough to be so. He walks freely and chearfully every where, as one that travels in the Day, undisturb'd with anxious Presage, or four Recollections. The Passages of Life are clear, open and pleasant. His Heart light, and his Steps secure. There's a bright Defence of heavenly Powers set about him. Such ocular Proof indeed as was vouchsaf'd the Servant of *Elisba*, is with-held; and one Reason hereof is this, he does not desire, at least does not need it. For what the Eye cannot see, the Soul feels. He wraps himself up in his own Innocence, as an impenetrable Armour, and fears no Evil, because he does none. Let the Elements bluster abroad, they cannot affect one that abideth in a good Room within Doors.

A clean Breast affords the sweetest Retreat at all times, and in the greatest Solitude, he is a good Companion to himself. At length, after many Years of Solace and Repose, he wears off smoothly and expires in Beatitude: According to that of the Prophet, *The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness Quietness, and Assurance for ever.* So much Reason have good Men to be satisfied with their own Choice. They have made a very wise one, doubtless, because a safe one in preferring Piety to every thing beside, and they can never repent of making it, so long as their Reason goes true, and judges like it self.

2. This Part of his History gives an Instance of the strange *Absurdities* Guilt runs Men upon. *Adam* upon incurring it, and therewith the Penalty of Death, immediately betakes himself to a *Thicket*; but what Account can be given of his Retreat? He was satisfied, no doubt, God did not with *bodily* Eyes look on at the Instant of Transgression. His withdrawing therefore must be from a Notion of his *Omniscience*. And yet if he apprehended God as omniscient and omnipresent, why did he go aside? If God were so, what could all the *Fig-leaves* of Paradise do for him in a way of Shelter and Protection? 'Tis certain, the *Thicket* prov'd not *impervious*

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to Providence. \* *The Lord indeed call'd unto Adam and said, Where art thou? But not to give you the Opinion of a Father touching the Expression, that it is a severe kind of Rebuke; as tho' God had said, to terrify him the more exceedingly, "What, and where art Thou! From what Grace and Innocence fallen! Come then and appear before me in order to Justice: If it be an Enquiry, it does not imply Ignorance, but a Condescension, to set a Pattern to Humane Processes, only represents God as a good Lawgiver, who is backward to punish, and will make a full Inspection into Fact, before he does so. Accordingly Adam appears before him, as if sensible 'twould be in vain to do otherwise. But to act inconsistently again, he is behind the Bush still, he seeks a lurking Place for his Iniquity, tho' he cannot find one for his Person. A sad Story he tells God of his Fear, and of his Nakedness, but not a Word of his Sin that occasioned 'em; as if he thought the Effect wou'd not betray the Cause, or God wou'd be kept off by his Trouble for the one, from taking Cognizance of the other. However the Almighty was not so taken up with his Compassions. He bespeaks him to confess and puts a Form of Words*

\* Gen. 3. 9.

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into his Mouth for that purpose, by questioning, \* *Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* And yet with all this sounding a Confession can't be extorted, only a Justification and such a one too as does but help to condemn him.

Thus the *whole* Procedure was a Course of *Contradiction*. Had he not deserv'd Vengeance *before*, he did *now* for the absurd and ridiculous Measures he took to escape it. And his After-impertinence was full as shameful as his Transgression. If his Reason had not deserted him with his Uprightness, tho' it cou'd not have help'd him to any firm sure Ground to set his Foot upon, it wou'd have taught him however to tread better on the infirm. The Fact he cou'd not deny, might have been ingenuously owned, and what he cou'd not defend he might have bewailed grievously. To appeal to *Mercy* is one way of appealing *Justice*, and if he cou'd sin notwithstanding God's Threatnings, why cou'd he not repent too, as not knowing but God might thereupon turn and repent likewise that he perished not. *Repentance*, tho' by no means an Equivalent of *Innocence*, had yet made the nearest Approaches to it that were possible, and he

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\* *Gen. 3. 11, &c.*

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might have laid so much Stress upon *that*, as to think that if God cou'd consider it without giving up any of his Attributes, he most certainly wou'd. But he wou'd not save God the Trouble of a Condemnation by condemning himself. He flies his Judge at first as Guilty, and yet pleads not Guilty in his Presence. Unaccountable Acting! But *Guilt* is alway thus pitifully attended, and has Folly no less for its Consequence than for its Cause: As 'tis impossible for one who hath his Eyes covered with *Mire* to see *clearly*. It sets us to reasoning and to contriving, but withal so choaks our Apprehensions and strangles our Thoughts that we can do neither. It is projecting, diffident, irresolute; it would fain go somewhere to abscond and sculk, but it knows not whither; and do something to help it self, but it knows not what! The vile *Caligula* abovementioned stole under his Bed when the Face of Heaven was troubled, for Refuge from Wrath *Divine*, which he then conceived hung over him. An Action worthy of a great Emperor! With such Conduct he cou'd not chuse but make a *Figure* in the World, and in *History*! Strange he should make a Piece of Wood his Protection; he might as *wisely*, when fallen down, have worshipped it. Other Sinners have been as remarkable for putting their Trust in the specious

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*a Sense of their own Wretchedness.* 81

specious *Fig-leaves* of counterfeit Sanctity and pretended Zeal. We can't help admiring at the Procedure, as knowing we have a God to do with, that can see Men thro' their Vizards, and follow 'em into all Retreats and Concealments. (Upon this Presumption a meer *Heathen*, as \**Lactantius* notes, cou'd rally such as did all they cou'd to smother their Works of darkness, and say, to what end is't to stand contriving and to hide our selves? We are under a Guard, and there's no escaping from our Keeper.) But the Wonder will lessen, if we consider 'tis for the present ease of a sick troubled Conscience, to hide those Stains and Defilements from her self, which she knows not how to remedy. As the Eye is a little reconciled to the Dung-hil, when it has the Mantle of Snow over it, altho' it remains a Dunghil still.

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\* *Div. Instit. Lib. 6. P. 584. Edit. Oxon.*

## CHAP. VI.

*The respective Apologies of our first Parents, with suitable Reflections on them.*

**A**S horrible as the Transgression was in it self; it was made much more illi-  
 vious by this Circumstance, that it went for no Crime at all with the Transgressors, themselves. *The Woman* whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree; and I did eat, says one of them. *The Serpent* beguiled me, and I did eat, says the other. Indeed some are of Opinion, these are not fram'd Excuses, but only true Representations of Fact: And if they be so, I agree with them, there was no Reason our first Parents shou'd make their Case worse than it really was: It was bad enough without such an After-heightning; and why should they take the Guilt of others upon themselves, when they had so much of their own. But I think we have as little Reason to turn Apologists for Sinners: Under favour, the Words themselves look very like Excuses, and a shifting off of Blame; and we know

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*The Apologies of our first Parents.* 83

\* who telleth us, that *Adam* slyly covered his *Transgression*, instead of honestly confessing it. Taking the Words then as they sound for a Confession with an artful Extenuation, we will enquire whether they mended their Case or no, by thus extenuating it.

As for *Adam*, his *Personal Apology* (as I intimated before) confutes it self, and out of the very Excuse, we may pick Matter enough to accuse him. For,

*First*, Was it the *Woman* that led him into Folly? Why was he led by her at all, especially in the Way of Sin and Wickedness?

*Adam's*  
transferring  
his Guilt on  
Eve.

Was not *Adam* first form'd and then *Eve*? Was not she also form'd out of the *Man*, yea, for the *Man*? The Scripture says so. Why did he suffer the *Woman* to usurp Authority over him? I argue on St. † *Paul's* Authority; but Reason alone would bear me out. I own she had her Guilt; I shall prove this by and by in regard of her *Seduction* by the *Serpent*, and it might be proved also with an Eye to her Behaviour toward *Adam*; but the Proof thereof wou'd not bring him in guiltless, or indeed take off from his

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\* *Job* 31. 33. † *1 Cor.* 11. 8, 9. *1 Tim.* 2. 11, 12, 13.

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Stains. As 'tis not the finding an Heap of Filth at another's Door, that will argue mine the cleaner. I own the Usurpation of Authority was a bad matter, and the manner of exercising it a worse, but yet the Sufferance of both came not short of either in Absurdity. I own too, her owing a Being to him, yea, and to his Necessity and Inconvenience, was not only a Tye upon him to consult his Convenience, but an Aggravation likewise to the Crime of advising to his Prejudice. But if she sinned greatly in *enticing*, so did he in *consenting*, yea, likewise in permitting her to do *that* to which she enticed him. His Duty reached farther, saith St. *Chrysostom*, than the bare *Refusal* of so criminal an Overture: He shou'd have prevented it, yea, than the *Prevention*; he should out of a Guardian Affection, have kept her no less from eating the forbidden Things, than from offering them. But instead of hindring, as well the bad Example as the Offer, to accept the one, and close in with the other; instead of leading off to good, to follow her in Evil, the greatest Evil. This was such an Inversion of Order, this was such a Breach of Duty as can hardly be reached by the *Exaggerations* of Rhetorick it self. If it be the Head's Province to steer and direct the Body, *Man* was the *Head* of the *Woman* to little purpose!

Besides

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Besides, the Woman did but give of the Tree, when he did eat; and I hope a Gift may be refus'd as well as accepted. At least we read not she did any thing more. She did not doubtless, if the Eating as soon followed the giving in Fact, as it doth in the History \*. He is said indeed to have *bearkened to her Voice*, and therefore 'tis possible she might entreat an Acceptance, and argue for't too upon the *Topicks* of Complacency and *good Fellowship*. But she cou'd do no more. There was hardly room for a Fallacy or Imposition. The *Serpent*, if acquainted with the modern Subtilties, might have went to work with her upon the Nature of Laws *positive*, such as *that* given to *Adam* no doubt was, affirming 'em to oblige those only to whom they are expressly and *personally* directed, and that therefore, since God directed this Law to *Adam* only (it being supposed to have commenc'd before the Date of her Being,) she was not at all affected by it. But the Argument, if it had any Appearance of Force in her Case, it cou'd not any farther. All Laws must oblige those to whom they are immediately directed, or no Body; and therefore *Eve* had no Loop-hole to find out for *Adam*, no Evasion. The Impression then

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\* See Patrick on Gen. 3. 6.



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must come from the Flatteries of Love, and the soft Language of a Wife, but it was not therefore justifiable. When there was so manifest an Interfering betwixt God's Commands and her Desires, he shou'd readily have determin'd himself on the side of Duty.

*His Glance-Reflection on Providence, considered.* Lastly, 'tis true, God gave the Woman, but he gave her to quite other Purposes than that of handing out the forbidden Fruit, viz. to be an

*Help-Meet* in Duty, a Companion in enjoying what was lawful with Thanksgiving. All the other Creatures were *Mutes* about him, that rather fill'd the Stage than acted on it. When she entred, she brought a Pitch of *Life* with her, resembling his, and so cou'd entertain his Mind with a more equal Converse. She was another *self* to him, beautified and adorn'd to charm and win his Affections, but not to give a wrong Turn to them. The Design of the Giver was good, tho' the Gift prov'd not so; and that it did not, was the Fault of the Receiver, who allowed it too much influence. Our very Tables may become a Snare unto us, but it is a Snare of our own making, if we let our Sobriety give way. If some Friend furnish'd 'em for us, it would be

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no fair Return to place our Excesses for that Reason to his Account. A Benefactor doth not cease to be one, because his Present may accidentally have been an Inconvenience. Adam therefore had much better have let his sly *Inuendo's* alone. He did but affront Heaven, without clearing himself. Time was when he himself interpreted the Mind of God aright in the Donation, and could pronounce his Comfort Heaven's best Blessing, as well as the Complement of the Felicities of his Paradise. But now his Exigence was desperate, his Cause admitted no formal Defence, and so Calumny was call'd in to fill up the room of Argument. As Men who have no better Weapon, think it no Shame to borrow one from the *Canal*, and hope to secure themselves by throwing Dirt. But still Silence had been his best *Apology*: Nay, according to St. Bernard, his latter Sin in *excusing*, was in some respects, greater than his first in *Eating*. Allowing this to be only a Flight of Fancy and holy Indignation, yet doubtless the Excuse was a Sin, and a Folly both. A Sin as bespattering the Face of infinite Purity and Holiness; a Folly, as being not likely to impose upon Omniscience. But for a fuller Conviction of its Vanity and Offensiveness, we'll appeal to the Event. Now if it had been of consequence, it had procur'd  
either

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either a Delay or an Abatement of the Sentence; whereas it did neither. It was no sooner pronounc'd than answered with Displeasure, and if the *Criminal* pleads, the *Judge* condemns.

The *Advices* that offer here, are these.

*Doctrinal Uses.* This Prevarication demonstrates *Sin* to be of an encroaching and *progressive* Nature. The first Transgression is not Disorder great enough of it self; but it must bring in a second; and when *Man* had broke a *positive* Precept by his Appetite, he proceeded, to violate a *moral* one by his Artifices. One wou'd have thought, having gotten so dangerous a Fall, he might have look'd to his Feet carefully, that he stumbled not again: But lo! he presently makes another false Step, charging God foolishly with the former.

And when I wou'd know, did any Wick- edness stand single? 'Tis ashamed to do so; it seldom can with Safety; it never can with ease. Accordingly, how oft do we find Lying made a Cover for an old Fault, and an Introduction to a new one? How mechanically as 'twere, do Men advance from Idleness to Extravagance, from Extravagance to Robbery, and from Robbery to Murder? How does the making no Conscience of Swearing vainly smooth and

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and glib the Way to the making but little of Swearing *falsly*? When \* *David* had committed Folly with *Bathsheba*, *Uriah* must be made *drunk* to keep the Dishonour done him, out of View, and sacrific'd afterwards, to cure the Scandal of the Correspondence. When † *Solomon* had took prohibited Wives, he soon embrac'd a prohibited Religion. The Passion he had for *strange Women*, inveigled him over to *strange Gods* too. When ‖ *Hazael* had dispossest'd *Benhadad* of his Throne and Life, he must divert the Peoples Zeal from justly enquiring after their Prince's Death, by employing it in a most barbarous manner, against the Lives of his Country's Enemies. Thus one Offence begets more, like the Encirclings of disturb'd Water. When a Breach has been once made for Sin to enter, it is an unruly thing, as a Stream when the River Bank is cut; it lays the Conscience waste, and there is no stopping it. So much doth it concern us to keep up the Mounds and Defences of Virtue, to stand aloof off from the outermost Line of Christian Liberty, to consider the Consequence of every Action and Undertaking, to call no self Indulgence small, or give way to it as if it were so, lest

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\* 2 Sam. 11. † 1 Kings 11. ‖ 2 Kings 8. &c.  
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what is a small Crime in our kind Conceit, proves a great one in it self, when coolly and deliberately weigh'd, or at least in its Effects, as leading to such as are so. I wou'd not have you set a Foot in the fatal Circle, because when you are got into it, you may be so enchanted that you cannot find your Way out again.

2. *The Nature of Adam's Plea for himself*, shou'd be a Warning to near Friends against an Abuse of Influence, and other mutual Advantages. They are the forwardest of any People to solicit and press upon the probable Prospect they have of succeeding in their Desires, and if they shou'd be guilty of any Error in the Matter, or occasion any Inconvenience by it, they loo to be forgiven on the Score of Friendship. Eve, no doubt, when she made the unhappy Tender to her Lord, expected to find in him an Advocate, rather than an Accuser in case of Inquisition for the Fact. But the Event in that Case prov'd her wretchedly mistaken, and so is no Encouragement to such Hopes for the future, consequently a Discouragement to all Seducements to Sin. For does *Adam*, when challenged about Eating, take all the Blame to himself, and all the Danger too? Doth he plead for her, the dear Object of his Love and Joy, and whatsoever befalleth him, interpose to receive the

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Strokes of Vengeance that she deserv'd for tempting him to do so? No, he wou'd indulge with the Woman, but with the Woman he wou'd not be punished. All that he had to say *for* himself, was something *against* her, and he said it too without Concern, whatever might be the Consequence. Now he grew a *Stranger* to his *own Flesh*, and in spight of all the kind Impresses of Nature, *her Conduct* is display'd in its proper Colours, to give a Flourish to *his own*. And does not the common Measure of the World fall as heavy in all Cases where *Self* is equally concern'd. How rare a thing is't for Men that are Partners in Guilt, to agree in taking every one his Proportion? Each is rather for transferring even that upon the rest, all Regard aside for Honour, Friendship, or Relation. Hence then sure we are taken off from being Instruments of Ill to others. For who wou'd care to have *Adam's* Complement to *Eve* repeated thus upon himself. "This was my  
" Tempter, and let the Blow light upon  
" him; that is, *in plain English*, tho' I  
" err'd for Company, I will not suffer  
" too, if I can help it by a lusty Impu-  
" tation. The Guilt is indeed mine in  
" part, but may the Punishment be whol-  
" ly his that occasion'd both. 'Tis a ve-  
ry bad use of Intimacy and Endearment  
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to prostitute 'em to the introducing of Vice; but if the Hatred of Sin cannot stave off such Sacrilege, methinks this Consideration shou'd, that the Face that is bespattered will certainly one Day return the Dirt upon the Hand that casts it.

3. *Adam's* turning over his *Guilt* (in effect) to God Almighty on the Account of its being subsequent to that *new State* of Life he had put him into, was a Piece of *Ingratitude* we can't look on with too much Detestation, to prevent a like Misconstruction of the same *providential* Circumstances. 'Tis a way of speaking too familiar with many, to say, *Marriages are made and seal'd in Heaven*, and to draw blasphemous Inferences, if they are unhappy in them; as tho' all their Wretchedness and Miscarriages came from Heaven too. But that we may judge of this Matter without Prejudice, and see its utmost Horror, let us view it in a *distant* Scene, in the Reasonings of the first Offender. Did it then become him to call his Maker, as it were, to account for his *own* ill Management, and to insinuate, that but for the *Help-Meet* provided him, he had kept his Integrity still? Was it not rather the height of Dis-ingenuity to deal thus with infinite Goodness, and throw back a Favour in his Face? We cannot think otherwise. But 'tis the same Dis-ingenuity over again,

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or greater, to ascribe every Thorn of the wedded Pillow, as the Vulgar do, to *Destiny*; greater sure, because God in a more particular manner presided over the first Bridal Solemnity, than he has done over any since. Whilst therefore they condemn his Language, they cannot well be partial to their own, whereof that is but the Counter-part. Shou'd the Wife of your Bosom, prove so far an *Eve* to you, as to bring Sorrow and Sin into it, this is not more your Misfortune than your Fault who suffer it; and the abiding Sense of *Adam's* Unworthiness in misrepresenting the Gift of God and his Intentions, will be the best Preservative in that Case against *Reflections* upon Providence.

As for *Eve*, she pleaded but Truth; for the *Serpent* had indeed beguiled her; the *Apostle* says the same after her twice over. But what then? Why did she let him do so? *Satan* is indeed a Tempter, as she represented him, a cunning one too (more *Serpent* far, in this respect, than *that* he tempted her by); but if he was cunning, she shou'd have been cautious. Still he is but a Tempter; he cou'd beguile, he cou'd not force. Her Will was her own, and her Judgment too if she had pleas'd; but forsooth! she must play booty against herself,

*Eve's Evasive Charge upon the Serpent.*

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self, and by trusting him with the latter, make way for his gaining upon the former. She enters into Argument with him; and to parly with an Adversary, is understood to be upon the point of yielding. He therefore comes up closer, whereas had he been received with Neglect, he had slunk off with Shame. According to \* *some*, she heightens the *Prohibition*, tho' perhaps with Design to lay a greater Obligation on her self of Forbearance: For when God had only said of the Tree of Knowledge, *Ye shall not eat*, she says more, we must neither eat nor touch it. If the *original* Word imports bare touching, this was an Addition of her own, and we may suppose he took Advantage thereof, to render her the more uneasy. She seems to abate of the *Sanction* †, and but just mentions it, as if the first Glance of Thought upon it, gave her a deal of Disturbance. However the *Tenour* of her Speech is allowed to make it probable, she stood admiring at the *Restraint*, as a thing past her Apprehension to account for, and wanted some more intelligent Head to let her into the Secret of its Drift and Meaning. He therefore renews his Assaults with more Warmth and Pressing.

\* See Cradock's *Old Testament methodiz'd*.

† *Left ye die.*

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He strikes in with her Desire of Information. He gives the Restraint a wrong Turn, and disputes away the Penalty with an Air of Certainty and Demonstration. And what shall I call the Result of such a Dialogue? Not Victory, but Submission. The Compliance at last cou'd not but be hearty, where the Denial at first was faint. *Eve* then being thus deceiv'd, that is, so easily, so willingly, was doubtless in the Transgression, and the Plea of Guile in the Case, gave a Gloss to it rather than a Defence.

Hence I would observe the ill Consequences. Of Deception or a Cheat upon the Understanding. Had our first Mother not been deceived, she had sent'd against the Transgression. The Fear of Death and Judgment well awake upon the Soul, wou'd have been true to Innocence and block'd up Attention to every thing that had Designs upon it. That she may be ruined therefore, she must be made confident of the contrary, and the Danger hid to invite her into it. *Lucifer* mis-states the Case, and the Consequence, gives a new and bright Account of things; what God had pronounc'd Evil, he furnam'd Good; he starts a Project of becoming like the most High, and that under the Appearance



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ance of discovering a Secret to her, that God envied her that Promotion which his greater Kindness was solicitous to procure for her. And when the Pit-fall is thus covered, and she hoodwink'd, there is no starting at all; she scruples not to venture over it. Thus the greatest Mischief came of *Misrepresentation*; and all others are resolvable into the same unhappy Cause: As a *Disguise* often passes the *Watch* unexamined, when the Person would otherwise be seiz'd. *Plutarch* in the Life of *Solon* remarks that the *Athenians* by calling Strumpets *Misses* and *Companions*, had almost distinguish'd away the Vice, given it the Air of quite another thing, and so help'd it to Business. The *Pagans* in \* *Tertullian's* Time could hardly see the Good that shone forth in Christians, for the Evil they were taught to suspect under the Name of *Christian*. But to give you the Effects of verbal Magick in an *Home-Instance*: How did our Fathers suffer themselves to be wheedled out of their antient Religion, Laws, and Privileges, by the popular Cry of *Liberty and Property*? As for the *Meaning* of the Words, that was to shift for it self, whilst they had the *Sound* to sweetly amuze and tickle them. Thus *Brass-Money* went for good Pay, as

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\* *Tertul. Apolog. ch. 3.*

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long as it had the usual Face and Inscription upon it. Indeed we every Day see how the Abuse of *Words* brings on of course, the Abuse of *Things* and *Persons*. The Reason is this; because the *Apprehension* governs the *Will*, and the *Will* the *Practice*.

2. Of *Levity* and *Inconsideration*.

One wou'd have thought it next to impossible for *Eve* under her bright Advantages for Faith ever to slide, at least so very soon, into Infidelity. For was not the Sound of *Revelation* still in her Ears, and *God* himself but just gone out of Sight? Did the Devil give any thing more than a *No* to *God's* *Tea*, offer any Proof, or Shew of Proof, when he drew out the Almighty by the black Lines of *Severity* and *Deceit*? Yet in spite of former Convictions, she gives up her Faith and her Conscience to his wild, because pleasing, Suggestions. One close Application of her Mind to survey the whole Nature, Tendency, and all the Circumstances of Things would have set it firm, above the Power of Temptation; and no doubt they all proffered themselves to her Meditation for that Purpose; but they were discouraged and bid to stand by. The amusing Whispers of that false Orator at her Elbow, operated to the Strength of an Opiate; lock'd up the Understanding and threw all the rational Nature into a

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sweet Doze. In this kind of Lethargy, she has only so much of Thought left as might serve to perceive and care for the Object that was so beautiful, so she suffered her self to be carried away with the Prejudice of Sense; and then there was no Difficulty in believing that to be right and true which she first earnestly desir'd might be so\*. The End she aim'd at, was bad and the Means bad whereby to compass it, yet they appear'd not such to her, who never view'd 'em on the Side of their *moral* Nature or otherwise than as they glitter'd upon the Imagination.

Now if Inadvertency or Shortness of thinking cou'd frustrate immediate Revelation it self, how easily may it undo us who are so far remov'd from such impressive Evidence? We lie open and bare to sensible things, our Dwelling is among them, our Satisfactions from them. Besides, our Senses being a great deal older than our Reason, they have had a long Familiarity with us before we receiv'd Notice of any thing else besides. Unless therefore we enlarge our Prospect by the Benefit of Contemplation, and remove the material World out of the way, by holding interchangeable Intercourses with the other, it

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\* *Edward's Preserv. against Socin. Pt. 2. Pag. 28.*

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### *The Apologies of our first Parents. 99*

cannot be avoided but that we become lost to *this*, and ingulph'd in *that*: Our Souls will sink down into our Bodies, and we shall have no other Apprehensions or Desires than what are fleshly. For the Impressions of things *Eternal*, are faint, of course, on the account of their *Futurity* and Distance; as the *greatest* Star of Heaven, by reason of its Remoteness from us, appears extreamly *little* to us, but a trembling Spark of Light: But the Images grow fainter still, 'till at length they shrink to nothing, where the Understanding never goes aside to meditate and refresh 'em. Hence it is that with the very *Busie* carking part of Mankind, where *Reflection* is a thing quite out of Doors, *Faith* is almost so too.

#### 3. Of unnecessary Strictness in Religion.

\* Had *Eve* understood the *Precept* just as God meant it, 'tis like she had paid the Obedience which God required. But the Notion, as tho' she might not *touch* what she was forbid only to taste, represented God to her as an hard unbenign Law-giver, that exacted up to Niceties and Punctilio's; and the thinking him so difficult to be pleased, rendered her care-

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\* If the present Remark be not well-grounded, it is yet practical, and I follow a learned Man in it. See Bp. Hickman's *Serm. Vol. 1. p. 15.*



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less in the matter of pleasing him. She ventures to taste what in her strait-lac'd Opinion she might not so much as touch; and the more she held her self confin'd in her Desires, the less she wou'd be so in her Actions. In like manner *Superstition* and *Prophaneness* are oft observ'd to succeed one another in the same Person, and in the same degree, just like the Vibrations of a *Pendulum*, the which, the farther you swing it this way, the farther it will return the other. An *over-scrupulous* Piety is too violent to be lasting. If we make a thing too great a Burden to our selves, we quickly throw it off for being so; and the Passions, like a River, swell the higher for having their Course quite stop'd. Lay not then the *greatest* Weight upon those Things on which God lays the *least*, or *none* at all. Your Stomach may be easily over-loaded by *affected* Austerities. Let it try first how it can digest *express* down-right Commands, and when it has turned them into kindly Nourishment, it will be time enough to supply it with *oblique* Intimations and *Counsels of Perfection*.

4. Of *Irresolution* and *Suspense* under *Temptation*. Eve shou'd have done by the *Serpent* as *Joseph* did by the Wife of *Potiphar*, requir'd him on the very first Motion to go no farther upon that Subject.

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A stout and *immediate* Negative wou'd have cut the Siege short. Finding her in earnest in her Refusals, he wou'd not have stay'd to be the triumph of her Virtue. But a Treaty once admitted, the Fort was lost. His Approaches, that were at first bashful, were freer afterwards upon the Hint of an Inclination siding with him, and the seeming *Modesty* of the Interrogation, *Hath God said?* readily pass'd into the *Boldness* of an Assertion, *ye shall not surely die.*

Whenever we are set upon by evil Suggestions, *Get thee behind me Satan*, that is, a flat Denial without a farther Reason, is an *Answer* beyond all Reasons and Authorities that can be produc'd. Hereupon he is quite non-plust, as knowing not how to deal with us, and like an Enemy out of Heart, he stealeth off in Despair. But if we come once to deliberate, we are gone. He asketh no more than an Ear, in order to an Impression. This gets him Ground to plant his Batteries, and so we are taken captive by him at his Will. An *innocent* Man falling into *ill* Company, if he wou'd not be infected by it, must instantly leave it. 'Tis not enough to purpose never to be infected. He cannot undertake for that, whilst he continues in it. *Good* Nature is free and pliant; *Mirth* throws off Guard; *Fear* of Ridicule calls

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for a little Compliance, and *Example* emboldens. By the Help of such disguis'd Snares as these, the harmless Adventurer is insensibly betrayed, and becomes at length the *Man* he once wou'd not have been for all the World; and thought he should never be. And the same Event will happen as oft as parallel Cases do, where Men invite Temptation, stay to receive, or contentedly sit by and dally with it; listen in the least to any bad Advice, or bear at all the Proposal of any Evil. Yea, the very combating a Temptation, tho' with Strength of Argument, giveth it an Advantage that we can very ill afford it, because we can't set our Minds to do so, but we must bring its Flatteries more in view which want only to be taken notice of to find a way to our Hearts. The only way of Conquest is to fight flying. There is no trusting to our present Mind and good Intentions, unless we draw back at first out of those Circumstances, those Opportunities that are apt to change 'em.

5. Of *Self-Opinion* and Indifference to those Helps and Directions Providence affords us for our Conduct. How much our first Mother stood in need of good Advice, let the Issue tell: Now her *social* Condition gave her an Opportunity of receiving it, and who then will not upbraid her for not taking it? She was

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too eagerly engag'd to make just Remarks her self upon the State of Things. In this Case nothing more proper than to debate the Matter with one that had a cooler Head and a loving Heart to serve her. Tho' he fail'd under the Temptation that came thro' her Hands, he might have acted well and wisely in the *consulting* Part; at least she had more Reason to suspect her own Judgment than his. And the asking it would have been her Virtue, as 'twas his Right, possibly a Protection too from Miscarriage. But she keeps the guilty Secret to her self, *scorning* to trust that very Bosom with it wherein she lay with Delight and Confidence, is too wise for Admonition, and so bespeaks her own Ruine rather than comes by it unwittingly.

And now I need not mention who are concern'd in the *exemplary* part of her Case. *The weaker Vessels* sure will on course beg Support from the stronger. The Affairs even of the *Men* are oft too weighty to rest on a single Judgment. Yea the *wisest* of Men are hardly wise enough in things that concern themselves, their own Interest or Pleasure. Their Spirits want to be temper'd, and the Counsel they give themselves, to be examin'd, because like to be such as their Affections call out for rather than their Reason offers. But if

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Consultation be necessary to *our* Sex, how much more to the *other*, who are born inferior in Intellectuals or seem so thro' Disadvantage of Education. I'm sure the *Apostle* supposes this, when he enjoins 'em to keep Silence in the Church, as unfit to teach; and to ask Questions at home, as needing to learn. And I beg their leave to say, were the *Husbands* Opinion and Consent oftner took along with 'em in what they go about, their Families wou'd be much happier and themselves more innocent: For as a pious Writer wittily observes, He is the Head, and a Man wou'd think the Understanding should be there. The wise Son of *Sirach* \* speaks thus upon the Subject. *A silent and a loving Woman is the Gift of the Lord; and there is nothing so much worth as a Mind well instructed.----- If there be Kindness, Meekness and Comfort in her Tongue, then is not her Husband like other Men.* Indeed I can imagine no Happiness, no Innocence on this side the *Paradisiacal*, like that of the *Married*, where the Thoughts and Desires of the one Party are the Thoughts and Desires of the other; where those tender Affections that make up the true Loveliness of humane Nature reciprocate, where Superiority is gentle, and Subjection

\* *Ecclus.* 36. 14. ----- 36. 23.

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pliable; where nothing is insisted on but Vertue, and equal Care is taken how to please the Lord, and one another. Hearts so exactly match'd are ever in Tune for Joy and mutual Entertainment; and the Musick they make, as being set to the softest Key of Harmony and Sweetness, Frailty it self can give no other Allay to than is necessary to prove it earthly, and that it wants an Heaven to perfect it.

To these Thoughts let me add a *general Remark* or two upon the *Primitive Apologies*.

*First*, The Pretences made by the Sinners in *Eden* for their Offence, help us in accounting for the Practice. *General Reflections.*

That *Apologizing* is a Practice, we are as sensible, as that Sin is so. For they go together and make room for each other by Turns. What was an heavy Crime in its Nature before the Commission, is ever but a Frailty after it. Treason *then* passes into the Love of our Country, Cheating into Providence, and Dissembling into a Necessity of the Times. If we wanton in Nonage, that's but a Trick of Youth; if we offend when in Years, this is but Dotage. When was it known that Evil walk'd abroad without a Disguise. If \* *Herod* cuts off the Head of a Saint, 'tis



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because of his *Oath*. If || *Corah, Dathan,* and *Abiram* rebel against *Moses*, 'tis for maintaining the just Privileges of the Congregation. If † *Esau* sells his Birth-right, 'twas still his Brother that supplanted him. If || *Cain* slays *Abel*, he is none of his *Brother's Keeper*. A fair Plea alway for a foul Action! Nor is't at all a Wonder, considering that the History thereof leads us up to *Adam*. It seems, we have it entail'd upon us by a kind of *Traduction* from him. But if we could claim Kindred upon no better an Account, we might well be contented to drop the Relation.

Again, the bad Success of these Subterfuges or *Evasions* may serve to discountenance so foolish and vile a Practice. When the sinning Pair had made the best of their Case, it look'd ill still in the sight of God, as you'll see in the sequel of the Story. The Accusation of the *Instrument* did not save, any more than it did clear, the *Principal*. Vengeance spreaded as wide as the Guilt, and was not softened by Excuses. And if we look forward to their Posterity, what have they been the better for mimicking them? Did Denial of Fact bring off *Cain*, or prevent a Banishment for't? Did the Cry of Zeal for God's Peo-

|| *Numb. 16.*

† *Gen. 27.*

|| *Gen. 4.*

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ple benefit the *Corahites*, or prevent a sudden Destruction? Did the Plea of *sacrificing* justify *Saul's* breaking a Command that was dearer to God than Sacrifice, or prevent a Rejection? These Sinners against their own Souls did all suffer for their fine Speeches, at least notwithstanding them.

And can we, after all this, expect that Sin should cease to be Sin by being covered? Or can we cover it from the all-seeing Eye of Heaven? By endeavouring to do so, we bring God's Wisdom into question; and will the disputing One Attribute recommend us to the Compassions of another. Besides, if, upon doing wickedly, the Excuse atton'd for the Transgression, where wou'd be the Duty of Confession; where the Vertue, the Necessity of Repentance? Thus it will be of little Service to us to hide our Iniquity, as *Adam*. His being hid did but the more appear, and so will *Ours*. The Mantle then had better be not put on, and good Resolutions made against Sin, instead of *bad* Excuses for it.

## C H A P. VII.

*The several Acts of Divine Vengeance  
on the Account of the Primitive  
Transgression, with the Improvement  
of them.*

**T**HE Offence of our First Parents has been sufficiently insisted on; we will now contemplate the Judgments of God inflicted for it.

The *Serpent* that was an Instrument in the Temptation, was a sharer also in the Sentence.

He had his \* volatile Pri-  
vilege, and freer Motion,  
*Curse.* exchange'd for a crawling  
Posture, and the Food of Fruit for that  
of Dust. The being expressly doom'd to  
the latter sounds like a *Deprivation* of the  
former. And a very sore Lot this! such  
as argued him *curst above all Cattle, and  
above every Beast of the Field.* For what  
Life can be grosser than to live by Dung-  
hil Filth, what Condition more ignomi-  
nious than to be trodden under Foot of  
Men? But to understand the *Alteration* a-  
right, we must not exclude by it all other

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\* See A. B. Tenison on Idolatry, c. 14.

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Provision, because 'tis certain in Fact he has a Stomach for better things, and cunning enough to procure them for himself; nor may we any more extend it, as to Posture, to all *kinds* of Serpents, than confine it to one *individual* Serpent, because there are some that have still the Gift of carrying themselves erect, if not of flying, reserv'd perhaps as *Memorials* of the first Serpentine Perfection. And if we imagin'd with *Josephus* they had Feet once, who now have none, this is not such a mighty Strain of Fancy, considering the strange Difference between the Circumstances of *Adam's* Being and ours, and the wonderful Inversion of *universal* Nature. As great however as his Losses have been, the *unthinking* Animal is not sensible of them; neither did they argue God was offended with him for what he could not help, the *Diabolical Possession*. As when the good Father strikes the Pen out of his Child's Hand, whom he catches writing beastly Lines with it, the Quill is not aim'd at by his Resentment. The Change was not meant as a *Punishment* to the innocent Brute, but a *Lesson* to guilty Man, a visible and standing Representation of the Devil's *Abasement*, who for circumventing the one in the Body, or under the *Appearance* at least of the other, receiv'd his Doom too under that Appearance. Thus  
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our *Saviour* cursed the *Fig-tree*, not so much for its Barrenness as Men's Hypocrisy lively shadow'd out by it; to give in it an earnest of the Judgments laid up for his worst Enemies, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, that made a *show* of good Works, as that did of Figs, but brought not forth what thou'd answer the fair Appearance, *Fruits meet for Repentance*; to signify possibly by such an *Emblem* the approaching Malediction, or *Rejection* of the *Jewish Nation* threaten'd afterwards, *Matth. 21. 43.*

Of this *strange* Severity the *Useful* Use may be this, *viz.* to deter *Remarks.* Men from acting in *Subserviency* to wicked Design,. Many that wou'd not dare to start a sinful Proposal will yet give into one, and minister to it in the Execution, partly out of an Easiness of Temper or Fear of disobliging, partly on a Prospect of sheltering themselves under the Plea of being over-aw'd or drawn in by others. The Contrivers of the Mischief, they are willing to suppose, will carry away such a large Proportion of the Guilt that there will be hardly any left for them to share. And while these are call'd out to Punishment, and to Infamy, they hope to steal off unobserv'd themselves. But what shall I call this but false Reasoning and satanical Delusion? For can the Commands or Persuasions of Men

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supersede the Laws of God, or make that no Crime in me which is in it self criminal. I owe them perhaps Service; I'm sure, I owe God Innocency. We must not make our own Will the Rule of our Actions, consequently not anothers, because either is but *Human*; that is, subordinate, and accountable to the *Divine*. If an *involuntary* Instrument in Evil fell as it were under Censure, what will be the Portion of *voluntary* Ones, when offended Justice comes to reckon with them? If a meer *Beast* that could not sin, yet suffered because an Assistant in Sin, what is the Demerit of *rational* Beings that *freely* lend their Hands, Feet, or Mouths to the Commission of it? I can't but think God design'd us this Inference, when he so formally address'd himself to taking Vengeance, *Because thou hast done this, cursed, &c.* However, if the Argument won't serve alone for proving the Danger of guilty *Compliances*, we have melancholy Fact to second it. When the \* *Captains of Fifties and their Companies* were sent to apprehend the *Prophet* of God, Heaven paid 'em for their Trouble by an immediate Destruction. *Abub's* Commission, it seems, cou'd not bear 'em out in what they did. The Errand being vile, their going upon it was so too. Whatever

Relation then you stand in to another, whether as Servants, Subjects, or Children, be not ye the Servants of Sin. *Accept no Person against your Souls; and let not the Reverence of any Man cause you to fall.* The Obligation of Obedience lies on this side Things unlawful; if you venture farther, you go beyond it and your Safety too.

Nor are we instructed only by the *present Form* of the *Serpent*: The mutual *Aversion* that has pass'd ever since between him and *Man* witnesses to us the *separating Nature* of all, even the least, *Concurrence* in Evil. This Creature was as harmless formerly as he was capable of Mischief; he quietly receiv'd his Name, and as friendly profess'd his Nature: Otherwise he had never been admitted by *Eve* to those Familiarities of Access which brought about her Ruine. But when once the Devil had acted his Imposture by him, Horror and Hate succeeded. *Now* he is alway dreaded, and alway terrifying. Destruction is his Expectance, as if he had an Impression, or rather *Consciousness* of some ancient Injury never to be forgiven, and Mischief is his Business as it were in his own Defence. And do we not see in *Fact*, as well as in *Hieroglyphic*, that no Injury is so much resented as that which affects our *Morals*? Who have Woe, who have Contention,

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who Jealousies, but *Brethren in Iniquity*? The gratifying of one Passion calls up another to revenge it; and where there have been lewd Confederacies, there will be on Course irreconcilable Enmity. And now one wou'd think we shou'd be afraid of eating four Grapes that are like to set our Teeth on Edge against one another. Who wou'd come near an untoward Beast to be kick'd by it? What Satisfaction is there in beginning a Correspondence upon such unlawful Grounds or Purposes as cannot justify it, and consequently are apt to break it off with Bitterness.

The Curse that took place upon the Serpent, did not terminate in him. <sup>The Devil's Doom.</sup> The Words of it, especially the latter, *I will put Enmity*, &c. agree also to the Devil who possess'd him, at least one way or other serv'd himself of him in his malignant Enterprize. That Possession or Subserviency might well occasion the including both in the same Menaces. And indeed if they were not to be understood of both (in a different Sense) we should be at a loss to find a Punishment allotted for the Creature that deserv'd it most: Whereas 'tis not to be suppos'd Divine Vengeance, that took hold of the lesser Delinquents, would pass by the Chief. I confess *Josephus* the Jew understands the Words simply

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ply of *natural* Antipathy ; but so do not the *Christian Fathers* ; so do not the *Jewish Paraphrasts* themselves. Instead of that lank and jejune Interpretation, they afford us *this*, That the *Messiah* should set fallen Man upon his Legs again by being *manifested in the Flesh to destroy the Works of the Devil*. And we may reasonably abide by it, because it gives us at once what will answer the Ends of Justice and Fact too. For what could be more grievous to a malicious proud Spirit, than to be told he should one Day lose his Power over Mankind as he at first gain'd it, by a *Woman* ? What more true than that he has lost it thus ? Christ, who was properly *the Seed of the Woman*, because exclusively of the Man, (being born, without him, of a pure Virgin) in the Fulness of time conquer'd him to our Hands. He indeed *bruise'd his Heel*, as crushing his Humanity to Death : But our Lord *broke his Head* effectually by triumphing over Death.

But we are not to strain this Conquest, as tho' it left nothing for us to do. The *Enmity* still continues *between the two Seeds*, and that mutual Aversion of Man, and all viperous Animals above-mention'd, is improv'd by Providence into a *symbolical* Signification of it. We read in what the *natural* Serpent does what the *spiritual*

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one can do, That his Attempts are secret, like the assaulting of a Man when his Back is turn'd, and yet weak, like the *bruising* of the *Heel*; That he is an arrant Coward, and will draw off upon the least Resistance; and that being like one, not secure of his own Strength, he must lie upon the Catch, and take us at all Disadvantages. Here then we are tacitly admonish'd to be at once vigilant and yet courageous. The assur'd Suddenness of the Enemies Approaches requires *Circumspection*. The known Feebleness of his Efforts forbids Despair. These *Conflicts* were to be common to both the Partners in Folly, consequently both Sexes. But they had their *peculiar* Troubles besides.

The Sentence on the *Woman* reaches her in the Capacities both of a *Mother* and a *Wife*, turning her very Comforts into Burdens. As the one, she has pains in breeding, bearing, bringing forth, and bringing up. As the other, the Uneasiness of *Lordly* Commands and a *forc'd* Submission. Not that there wou'd have been no Submission due to *Man* upon Supposition of a Perseverance in Righteousness. For Eldership and Dependance as to Being, wou'd have exacted it as Tribute. These were Reasons for it before she transgress'd, and therefore wou'd have been



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been so, if she had not; but whereas then it wou'd have been paid with Pleasure, being sweet and easy as Nature itself, it now comes heavily, and with Regret as Penance. Obedience, alas! the *Word* is what many of that Sex cannot bear, and yet the *thing* all must. Duty obliges to it, and superior Strength procures it.

And 'tis worth observing how in this latter Appointment *Severity* answers *Guilt*.  
*Practical Remarks.*

The Woman precipitantly follows her own Desire, acted in a very nice and weighty Point without imparting the Matter to her Husband. For this Reason her Desire shall be to her Husband, and he shall rule over her; that is, 'tis decreed by way of Multa on her Overforwardness that the Will she so giddily run away with shall be hers no longer, but given up to be determin'd by the Man's. The Yoke she was for throwing off, when so very light, is laid on again with double weight; as unruly Children, that ramble away from the discipline of an easy Master, are twice as much confin'd afterwards.

This then may be an Argument for Patience under the divine Dispensations of whatever kind. Eve gain'd nothing by quarrelling with the Condition of her Being, and the Laws of her Sex but additional ties to Duty and heavier Obligations.

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She broke her Teeth with the biting the Chain. And what does ever come of Reluctancy and Opposition to settled Rules and Methods, but farther restraint, even in the ordinary Course of Providence. If a Prince be encroach'd upon by his Subjects, he is but provok'd thereby to tie up the hands, as much as may be, that make so vile an use of their Liberty; and we have known Rebellion to a lawful, just and gentle Government introduce the Tyranny of an Usurper. So that Submission in all Cases of Power and Authority is as well the wisest as the most dutiful Method of Management, because the more we struggle with our Bonds, we tie the knot the faster.

But a farther Improvement may be made of the Malediction. The ground of it seems to have been not so much Eve's sinning herself, as her tempting Adam to Sin: For when Adam (being question'd by God about his past behaviour) lays the Temptation to her, the Almighty as it were turning to the Woman, expostulates thus, *What is this that thou hast done?* Here his Transgression is made hers who led him into it. And tho' the personal Act of eating is acknowledg'd thereupon antecedently to the Curse, yet God gives no new Reason for denouncing it. His denouncing it too when he did, that is, e'er Man had receiv'd his Sentence, seems to give her a  
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Preference in the Guilt. And let me add, that the \* Apostle speaks of what she had done with such an Emphasis as if she were the only Transgressor. Whence it follows, that to *tempt* to Evil, is to *do* Evil, and that in the worst Sense. Indeed it supposes the having done it already; it being improbable one shou'd like that at *second* hand, which he has not known at the *first*. And it supposes too an Inclination to the doing it again; it beng unlikely one shou'd love to see what he does not love to practice. It implies also as much ill-will to the Persons of Men, as it does Complacency in their Vices; it being hardly to be imagin'd one shou'd endeavour what he knows will tend to another's Ruin, without wishing his Ruin at the same time. In all which respects it resembles us to Devils, and no wonder then if we fare in some measure like them too. Sure I am, Scripture-Satyr runs high against the Practice. 'Tis the great Blot in the Character of *Jeroboam*, not that he sinned himself, but that he *made Israel to Sin*. And *Jezabel* is more tax'd for the Wickedness of *Ahab*, because she *stirr'd him up to it*, than for personal Iniquities. I hope then if our Hearts are set on the Ways of Unrighteousness, yet we will not seek Company in them. The

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\* 1 Tim. 2. 14.

going alone in Folly may perhaps be more irksom for the present, but it will be less ruinous hereafter, because the reckoning in *Hell* bears proportion to the Number of Sinners that we carry thither. Yea, it is sometime less irksome here, and generally less ruinous. *David* owed the Loss of his Child by *Bathsheba* expressly to this, that he caus'd the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, tho' he caus'd 'em to do so not directly, nor persuasively, but only accidentally by the ill Use they made of his Sin toward disparaging his Religion; and 'twas in regard to that Circumstance of his Sin, that even after it was solemnly pardon'd, it lay as a dead Weight upon the Mind, too heavy for him to bear.

The Sentence on the *Man* is as severe as the former; *Man's Allotment.* it inflicts Care and Drudgeries, but of another kind more suitable to his Station. *Because thou hast hearkened to the Voice of thy Wife, and hast eaten of the Tree which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat it.----- In the Sweat of thy Brow shalt thou eat Bread.* The Substance of the Injunction doth not make the Judgment, that was no new thing upon the Lapse; for he had a Task set him antecedent to it, viz. to dress and to keep the Garden: And had there not been this of Divine Appointment, his own Geni-

Genius or Condition wou'd have found one for him. But here lay the Difference, and consequently the Judgment; that whereas *before* he dress'd a Garden, *now* he is to cultivate a Wilderness: Whereas before he exerted himself purely for Amusement and Diversion, with Ease of Body and Content of Mind; now he does it to work out a Subsistence with Weariness of Flesh, and Vexation of Spirit.

To make way for this  
*The Earth's* Weariness and Vexation,  
*Curse of Bar-* the very Ground is cursed.  
*renness;*

Thenceforward as if infebled with Age, and spent, she bestows nothing but what is wrung from her by force of Art and laborious Application. Being hardned, as 'twere, and petrified by his Sin, she must be mollified and suppled with his Sweat, e'er her Bowels can be wrought upon to be bountiful. And what is there in this unbecoming a wise Deity? O yes, crys the *Deist*, it is a misplac'd Revenge, a Sally of Passion like to *Human*, which vents itself upon every thing that comes in its way, even on inanimate Creatures themselves. But why, I pray, does he think so? Is it Passion to do justice? Is it misplac'd Revenge to punish the guilty in all Instances that may sensibly affect them? And cou'd any Instance of Punishment be more sensible than to see Na-

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ture put out of Course, and the whole vegetable World about him the worse for his Folly? What if the Earth had done no wrong? Neither I hope did it suffer any by the inflicted Barrenness: As the Plants are not *unfortunate* by the Wounds they receive when they are dismembred or cut down. At least, she did not know she did; and an Injury unperceiv'd, is next to no Injury at all. Man was the only Criminal by a voluntary Trespass, and Man the only Sufferer in the Consequence by the help of a reflecting Mind and a sensible Frame. And where is the Hardship, if for his Chastisement, when she yields him Food, she gives him a Portion of Sorrow with it?

Here again, we may behold  
a Correspondency between Sin and Punishment. *Practical Reflections.*  
Adam forsooth! that had the Sweets of Plenty around him, all of Nature's providing too, cou'd find no manner of Contentment in them. An unlawful Object first calls up his Eye after it, and then his Appetite; and so all others are thrown aside as tasteless in Comparison. For this Surfeit of Voluptuousness, he's made acquainted with the gnawing Pains of Wind and Emptiness; and to make him smart for his former Indifference and squeamish Delicacy, instead of the Earth's being li-

beral of her *best* Treasures, as before, he cannot now come at the very *worst* without digging for them. *Thorns* and *Briars* are set to guard her Surface, as tho' she was become deaf to his most importunate Necessities; and if he offers to come near for a little Provision, they silently bid him stand off as it were by angrily molesting him. Thus (to use an homely *simile* upon an homely occasion) Beasts, tho' in a good Pasture, fare not well enough, if bounded in, thro' a sickly longing after Novelty; so they adventure to leap the Hedge, and fare much worse.

And may not this Event serve as an *Emblematical* Lecture to all *Prodigals*, telling 'em loudly what they are to expect at last, if they continue so much longer. 'Tis certain, Luxury and Intemperance have commonly for their last Guest the hungry Wolf *Necessity*: That stands at the Door, and will be let in when the rest are gone, to keep Madmen and Fools company. To loathe wholsom Food is a bad Omen, somewhat like an earnest of feeding upon Husks; and how oft are innocent Delights put out of his reach, that once despis'd 'em, thro' an idle Affectation of such as were not so. A just Judgment, and a stinging one too. For straits sit on none so heavy as on those who have abounded, and shou'd do so still but for their Wantonness and Folly. The  
Memory

Memory of past good Things, and a Reflection on the guilty Cause of present Evils, render those Evils most pungent and intolerable; as an invenom'd Arrow is twice as painful as another.

2. Hence Men of Business and Fatigue may be taught how to improve their very *Callings* to the Purposes of Religion. For if *Adam* was put to no Drudgery in *Eden*, had no other Charge upon him than to serve the Glory of his Creator, and in so doing to consult his own; if *Sin* was the deadly Thing that brought a *Blast* on Nature, untuning the Proportions of its *Natural* Harmony, the bairful Seed of every Briar and *Thorn* in human Life, how shou'd this render them most averse to the Cause of so much trouble, and yet easy under the sad Effect? How shou'd this sweeten necessary Toils with the Consideration of what made 'em necessary, and engage them also the more to take care that heavenly Thoughts and generous Aims mingle in the exercise of their several Occupations? "Are Labour and Travail my *Portion under the Sun*? I will not then drag on heavily as tho' they belong'd not all to me. Was it Guilt that help'd me to this Portion? I will accept it as the Punishment of Iniquity, and thank the Lord for thus giving me warning. I will take this warning too not to commit more

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“ Iniquities in following my worldly Buſi-  
 “ neſs. ’Twas enough for Sin to lay ſuch  
 “ a load of Cares upon me, Sin ſhall not  
 “ help me off with them, or be ſeen in  
 “ bearing them. It is an heavy *Penance*,  
 “ but it ſhall prove a whoſom one by the  
 “ Grace of God and my own Circumſpe-  
 “ ction. ’Twas enough for Sin to *debaſe*  
 “ my Condition in this World, Sin ſhall  
 “ not take advantage of my Condition to  
 “ ruin me in another. ’Tis difficult to  
 “ employ one’s ſelf in *many things* without  
 “ being engag’d in *ſome ill ones* too; but  
 “ while I ſet my Hands to the work of my  
 “ Vocation, I’ll ſet my Affections on the  
 “ more immediate Service of God. The  
 “ Affairs of both Worlds ſhall go on at  
 “ once, and when my Knees are not my  
 “ own, I’ll bow with devout Ejaculations  
 “ in my Heart before him.” Such *ſhou’d*  
 be, ſuch *will* be the *Soliloquies* of an honeſt  
*Pains-taker* that reflects upon the *Fall*. And  
 if they are, the very *Effects* of Sin become  
 its *Remedy*, and the Punishment ſuffered  
 for Sin, the mechanic Actions of the *lower*  
 Life, are happily converted to the Uſes of  
 the *higher*.

3. Hence we learn what to think of  
*noxious* Plants and Animals, and where  
 to lay the Blame of all their *Offenſivenesſs*  
 and Malignity. Our Thoughts and our  
 Diſcourſes both on this Subject need A-  
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mendment. For we are us'd to take large  
 Freedoms with the *Works* of God, setting  
 out some as perfect, unaccountable Evils,  
 and bestowing no better Epithets on o-  
 thers, than those of ugly, hateful, contem-  
 ptable. But *this our way is our Foolishness*,  
 and, what is worse, our Sin. For if there  
 be any *Blot* in the *Book* of Nature, 'tis of  
 our own making, and therefore to find  
 one *there*, is to cast *another* upon our selves.  
 This is certain, when God had finish'd  
 his Creation, he declar'd all Things good  
 in it, and *Adam* felt 'em so. Good they  
 were all at *first*, and they are so still in  
 themselves. Some indeed are not so good  
 to us now as formerly, so useful and so  
 innocent. Possibly Briars and Thorns  
 were not once in the Scheme of *Vegetables*.  
 Certainly other Animals beside the Ser-  
 pent are become *new* Creatures in respect  
 of their Qualities and Effects. But then  
 'twas not of their own Accord, nor yet  
 with Divine Liking that they became  
 \* *subject unto Vanity* and evil Tendencies.  
*Man*, alas! by forfeiting his Innocence,  
 took away theirs, and he did ill himself  
 before he found any Ill by them. Had  
 he not dishonour'd the Creator, he had  
 not been affronted by the Creature. But  
 they disdain to *serve* Ingratitude, they



are bound as Subjects of the most High, to take his Part against Traitors and Rebels. And now shall thus doing but their Duty, be construed to their lessening? If they go off from their own Nature to espouse so good a Quarrel, is not this what shou'd be? *Forgive 'em then this Wrong*, as you wou'd acquit *Executioners* of Justice, and set the Mark of Reproach upon the right Forehead, that is, your own. When the *Ass* stood still, she did but what she was commanded, and to hinder *Balaam* too from doing what he was forbid, and therefore he shou'd have laid his Hand upon his Mouth, instead of laying it so heavily on his Beast; he should have spared her, and corrected himself. However, because he did not, she did, that is, rebuked the *Madness* of the Rider. And the Words miraculously given her on that occasion [*What have I done to thee, that thou hast smitten me?*] are a Remonstrance that may be turn'd against us, whenever we fall out with any of God's Creatures for revenging *our* Disobedience by *theirs*. They are dumb indeed, and so cannot speak out their own Defence, but we shou'd for them, tho' it be against our selves, because a just one. Their Services to *Moss* were formerly as great as those she upbraided to *Balaam* as ill requited, and wou'd be so still, but that *Restiness* is our desert, consequently

sequently their Duty. And therefore 'tis a wrong thing to propound rather the mending of Nature than of our selves.

But neither is *Chastisement*, which is a very good End, the only one. *Natural History* and *Medicks* tell us of the most troublesom and venomous, that they are really necessary to the present State of Things, necessary either as *Ingredients* in *Prescriptions* to help off with Diseases, or as *Emunctories* to the Earth to lick up putrified and malignant Matter from it. So that to speak properly, and represent the Case truly, their *Service*, after all, is rather *chang'd* than *withdrawn*, and they are not so much the *Cause* of our Misery, as a *Relief* under it. And if so, there can be no manner of Pretence to differ with 'em: As that *Servant* cannot be blame-worthy who, when his Master is disorder'd by Drink or Frenzy, suits himself and his manner of Tendance to the other's unhapp-  
py Circumstances, and throws all his Roughness into his Voice and Gesture to manage him the better. In short, upon a due estimate of Things, I know no *Toad*, *Viper* or *Vermin* hateful, except what gave Being, if not to them, yet to their *Venom*, *Sin*, that lies crawling in our own Bosoms without Trouble or Molestation.

4. *Adam's* hearkening to the Voice of his Wife in an ill thing, being made part of the

Preamble to his *Sentence*, and mention'd too as the Ground of that *Sentence*, reaches out a Caution to the married against ill Impressions incident to them as such. I did not give way *before*, neither do I now, to Satyr for Satyr sake; but I can't help taking the Opportunities the *History* so often lays in my way of arming Men against an unhappy Privilege in that Sex, *viz.* to be able to do great and important Mischiefs by means of their *conjugal* Endearments. The prudent, yea, the most virtuous has his *soft* Place, and had need be alway guarding it, or the *Bosom-favourite* shall steal upon it unawares, and if she be not prudent and virtuous too, inveigle him into Actions that shall reflect on both. The Caressings of the Pillow, and the tenderer Minutes of the Day, which she is a constant Witness to, when he is most easily wrought upon, and made pliant to her Hands by some foregoing Circumstances, exceedingly favour such Surprizes: To say nothing of the many little Freedoms she can take (which wou'd look fulsome in others) very serviceable to that Purpose. All Seducers understand this enough to encourage their Application *that way*, and tis almost a Maxim with them, that when once *filly Women* are *led captive*, wise Men follow of Course: As, if the *Stomach* or some other inferior Part be ill affected, it makes

makes the Head soon bear a Share of its Disorders. Hence, and no other way, may we account for those strange Exchanges sometimes made, and by Men of Sense too, of a good Religion for an unsafe one, Protestantism for Popery, the Church for the Conventicle. But let me conjure all that would be reputed wise here, and be safe hereafter, not to resign up Judgment to Affection. For if it avail'd not Adam to give this Account of his first Sin, *the Woman whom thou gavest, &c.* What would it avail them to give the same Account of their *Heresy* or their *Schism*? If the hearkning to so false a Friend made Heaven and Earth his Enemies, how can they lay themselves open as he did, and yet hope to prosper upon the one, and be admitted finally into t'other? The tender Passions then may offend by Excess as well as on the defective Side. There are Bounds which they shou'd not pass; and the Scripture is the Rule to know them by, which says, *Husbands love your Wives*, but it does not say, *adore them*.

There is one Instance of God's Severity on our first Parents still behind, and that a greater still, *Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return*. As much as to say, "My Intentions toward you in case of Loyalty to all my  
The general  
Doom of Mor-  
tality.  
G 5. "Precepts,

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" Precepts, and in way of Repentance for  
 " the same, had been highly perfective of  
 " your Happiness. You had had the Bless-  
 " ing of Immortality added to all the rest,  
 " with an Exemption from temporal E-  
 " vils. But being deserted by you first,  
 " I shall now leave you to all the Mean-  
 " nesses of your Extraction. You, *Child*  
 " of *Lucifer*, after all your vain aspiring  
 " and bold Essays toward *Divinity*, thou  
 " art but animated Clay; and to demon-  
 " strate that you are so to your very Sen-  
 " ses, let Pains, Sickneses, and Afflictions  
 " act their utmost Spight upon you.  
 " I made thee thus to prevent *Pride*; but  
 " my kind Aim not being obtain'd, to  
 " punish it, thy End too shall be as base as  
 " thy Beginning. Worms were thy El-  
 " der Brethren, and to revive the Kin,  
 " Worms in good time shall sweetly em-  
 " brace and cover thee. This I take to  
 " be as well the Sense of *the Words*, as the  
 " Truth of *the Case*. *Adam* doubtless was  
 " not from his first Creation inevitably mor-  
 " tal; as we are now, whatever may be pre-  
 " tended to the contrary. For *first*, the  
 " things that render us so, He knew nothing  
 " of; in his State of Uprightness, *Unbol-  
 " somness* of Diet, *Irregularity* of Living,  
 " and *Anguish* of Thought. We carry for-  
 " ward Seeds of Corruption about us, and  
 " often die by the very means of preserving  
 " Life!



Life! But his Appetites were too temperate to let in Infirmities upon him; his Food (one wou'd think) too innocent to mischief him; his Mind too compos'd, and easy to sour the Juices, or prey upon the Vitals. Yea, and the Elements of his Frame, tho' contrary, yet had a most equal Poise for the kind Purpose of dwelling together in a lasting Amity. Hardly any thing perhaps save Hunger and Want, (in a long Tract of Ages) cou'd have broke the loving Amity; and what Danger to be apprehended thence, whilst Eden spread a Table constantly before him of every thing desirable: Tho' his Body therefore was made of Dust, yet those Circumstances may seem to have forbid the Decays which at last turn ours into Dust again. But, we're sure, a watchful Providence wou'd have done so, upon Supposition of Obedience. The very threatening of Death to *Eating*, gave hope of a Conservation in Life in case he did not eat. For if Death had been his sure absolute Destiny, I know not how it cou'd be made the Penalty of Transgression, that is, how it cou'd answer the End of Penalties, deter from Transgression. For Necessity is an unpersuasive thing, and if he knew he shou'd die on course, tho' he did not sin, 'twas not to be expected, he wou'd forbear Sin thro' a fear of dying;

much

much less can I conceive how it cou'd be represented as it is, the Consequence of his Transgression. For so saith the Apostle, *By one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin.* Sin therefore was not only the *Sting of Death*, but the Parent too, and gave it as well its Being as its Horrors. If *Adam* then should have gone out of the World, tho' Sin had never come in, the manner of going still had been of another kind, by a Translation, not thro' the Gate of Mortality.

But neither on the other Hand was he at his first Creation *absolutely* immortal. For if he were so, what meant the *conditional* Promise of Eternal Life implied in the *Adenace* above-mention'd? What meant the *Tree of Life* in Paradise? A Promise supposes the not having that already which is promis'd only upon Condition for Futurity. The *Tree of Life* was not set, to be sure, merely for Show, but for Use, either as a *physical* or a *sacramental* Cause of Immortality; to produce or to assure of it. But what Occasion for such a Means or such a Pledge of Assurance, were his Body immortal before by the Result of its very Nature. Besides a Creature that is so, does not need to have his Life supported by eating what he shou'd, cannot dye upon eating what he shou'd not. But *Adam* did both: The allowed

lowed Fruits of the Garden were necessary to his Support, (else why were they provided?) the forbidden instrument to his Destruction. The Matter therefore stood thus: *Adam* was capable of Death, but yet a Probationer for Immortality. And had he qualified himself as he ought, in that time of Tryal, he had no doubt obtained it. Nor do I see much to object to that Opinion touching the Tree of Life, that it should have been the Instrument of conveying that Blessing to him. For why should we resort to new and extraordinary Means in this Case, when we know God contents himself with those ready at hand in most Cases? Why might not the Fruit we are speaking of have a *virtue* Vertue then, as well as others a medicinal one now? Questionless that Fruit had some Interest in the Business of immortalizing; the very Adversaries of this Opinion will allow it to be *typical*, and significative of an endless Life; and why then may not we suppose it instrumental too, (on the Account of that Compendiousness visible in all the Works of God,) and that Man having once tasted thereof, should derive an indefeasible Youth and Vigour. The Words spoken after his Fall, as the Reason of driving him out of *Eden* [*lest he put forth his Hand, and eat, and live for ever*] look

look very much this way, as if there were such a natural Vertue in it to fortify the Constitution.

Some have thought the Use of it shou'd take place only at the instant of Translation as a Means of strengthening the Body for that better Place where the lower Offices of Nature cease, and enabling it to live thenceforward without the Supplies of outward Nourishment; and that therefore † St. John, by way of Allusion, tells us of him that *overcometh*, that is, maketh those Improvements in Vertue Adam shou'd have done, that after the Resurrection, *He shall eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.* The supposing it a Restorative, they judge, seems to bear hard upon the Credit of our first Being, which they are willing to believe wanted no other Repair than what the daily Food in Paradise cou'd give it. But still the Language of the \* Fathers is against them, who maintain'd a remote Tendency to Corruption even in the best complexion'd Body, and that nothing but Recourse to that sovereign Remedy, or the especial Power of God, cou'd have sway'd and over-rul'd it. After all, we

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† Revel. 2. 7.

\* See Bull's Sermon. p. 1086, 1094, &c.

are quite out of our Depth, and the precise State of Matters is a Bottom we cannot fathom. And 'tis fit it should be so, to keep down the short Line of Reason, that is for perking up above it self, and weary out an over-busy Speculation. Besides, what need of dry Reasoning, and a learned Pother sometimes made about the manner of Communication? The Book of Life 'tis as certain was design'd thus, as that God is true, Just, and good. But alas! it was but design'd, *Adam* suffer'd it to come no farther than in Promises. He forfeited all Pretensions to it for himself and for Posterity. The Grave thereupon was unavoidable, and a Confinement there wou'd have been so too but for an After-delivery by him who has the Keys of Death.

Thus I have explain'd the whole Process of the Judgment pass'd on *Adam* in Paradise. 'Tis a Tragedy, of great Variety, and the deepest too that ever was or shall be acted on the Stage of Nature, excepting the last and finishing Scene of Providence: yea the deeper (tho' it be somewhat like a Paradox to say so) for this very Reason that Comedy mixes with it, as we shall see it does, if we review the latter Part of the Doom.



*The great* *Dust thou art;* so God  
*Scene of Judgment* begins with him in a way  
*Scene on Adam* of Sarcasm and Indignation  
*unfolded* *Thou* To give a Damp to  
*view his* *haughty* Spirits; and take  
 'em down in the midst of all their Pride  
 and Glory; we usually glance at the  
 Vileness of their Original or Parentage.  
 As bad Money is expos'd by removing the  
 false Glitter, and shewing the native  
 Coarseness of the Metal. The Dirt from  
 whence they sprung must be brought in  
 View, when nothing else can cure their  
 Giddiness, or cause the Swelling to retire.  
 Accordingly God sends his towering Crea-  
 ture for his Humiliation to the Pit of Ob-  
 scurity out of which he was digg'd. He  
 takes Advantage against him from the  
 Consideration of his precarious Being, for  
 aggravating the Rebellion. He lays him  
 flat upon his Face, and then as 'twere  
 tramples him under Foot, as Filth, yea  
 as the very Dunghill of Unworthiness.  
*Unto Dust thou shalt return.* He makes  
 the most of the abasing Topick; he dooms  
 him to his first Principles again. *Like*  
*Salt that has lost his Savour* he allows  
 him to be fit only to rot and perish in  
 the Earth. And when the Argument has  
 been exhausted, and set home upon his  
 Mind, the loathsome Thing is made to  
 stand.

stand forth, like a Toad or a Snake in a King's Presence-Chamber, without any Retreat for his Shame, any Veil to hide his Infamy and Blushes.

And the Lord God said, *Behold the Man is become as one of us, to know Good and Evil.* \* There is the Height of bitter Irony in the Allusion. "Ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil; a Golden Offer indeed, from one rich in Promises! and see how notably 'tis fulfill'd by leading him into the Noose, and then retiring. Look you now, is not Man become a God! How hath he over-reach'd us and mounted himself, in spight of us, into the Divinity he affected. Yes, this mightily appears indeed by the wondrous Upshot; if to lose the Divine Image be to gain more of it still, and Top-felicity consists in the lowest Ebb of Shame and Misery. How finely does he know Good and Evil? Who wou'd not envy him the choice Attainment, if to be a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquainted with guilty Grief be a State worth wishing for, worth purchasing at the Price of Wisdom, Honour, and Immortality! Nor is Sarcasm at an end yet.

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\* See Patrick in loc.

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*And now lest he put forth his Hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat and live for ever* \*. This Expression is defective; abrupt only, as it were, by the force of Anger and Resentment. Not that the Almighty is subject to any violent or uneasy Impression whatever, but in kind stoop to our Apprehensions he is pleas'd to veil himself under that disguise, and speak sometimes as if he really were. " This Bubble of Vanity puff'd up as this, " will perhaps be for one Effort more to " exalt himself into the highest Orb of " Glory; and because the *Tree of Know-* " *ledge* did not answer his purpose, make " an Experiment upon *that of Life*. And " no doubt if he shou'd get at it, he wou'd " commence at last something so super- " excellent, as to be able to dispute Sove- " reignty with Heaven it self, and so make " himself rich Amends for his former Mis- " adventure. To prevent therefore this " dangerous Rivalty, we must hurry him " off from the high Ground he stands " on into the Precipice below, and so " weaken the Adversary that deems him- " self a Match for us! As the interpreting the Words to a Sense of Sharpness and Derision thwarts not the *Context* or Te-

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\* See Pool's Annot. in loc.

nour of the Discourse, so neither does it impute to God a Condescension *unknown to Scripture*. We have a pregnant Instance of it in the Address of *Elijah* to the Worshippers of *Baal*. *The Spirit of God* by him cut them deeper *than they are said to cut themselves*. 'Cry aloud, for he is a God full of Thought, perhaps and Contemplation, and so not at leisure to attend your Whispers, or overtaken possibly with sleep, and so you must rouse him by a Peal of clamorous Importunities. Such Reasoning as this had an Air of Pleasantry, but withal a serious Design at the Bottom, and while it did bite the Ear, meant to pierce the Minds of Men which had such a thick Skin of Prejudice over them: As Salt is applied sometimes for cleansing Sores in order to a Cure. Nor may we pronounce any thing inconsistent with the Majesty of Scripture or its Author, that can promote the great end of Scripture, the Good of Souls.

Thus God did not only punish Man's Presumption, but upbraid it too, to give the Punishment its gracious Effect upon him of bringing him to Recollection. *Angels* all the while explode and hiss at *Folly*, and at length are set on work to expel and keep him out of Paradise. There are those, I confess, that understand no more by the *Cherubims* and the *flaming Sword*

Sword, than a Wall of Fire encompassing the Garden. But † as the Words in the *Original* are generally thought to take in the Service of Angels, so their being interested in this Affair, does not at all clash with their common Character; for they are God's Ministers for all Occasions, and do all his Pleasure without Exception to his purposes of Severity. Even the *Jewish Proverb* allows 'em to fly with one Wing on a vindictive Errand, and the confining 'em to one on this Occasion, means only to set out His Long-suffering the more *emphatically* by whom they are commission'd. However, the *Jewish Bible*, that is much rather to be depended on, presents us with several more *Instances* of Vengeance, the Appointment whereof was God's, and the Acting *Theirs*, as particularly the Destruction of lewd \* *Sodom*, the Infliction of a Pestilence on *Israel* for † *David's Sin* of numbring them, the cutting off the proud || *Assyrian*, and the smiting \* *Herod* with a Disease as opprobrious as the Acclamations of his Flatterers were blasphemous. Let it not be doubted then, but that the puissant Host of happy Spirits were the fiery Centinels of Paradise, set by God

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† *Tenif. of Idol. Ch. 14. Part 3. & 5.*  
 \* *Gen. 19. † 2 Sam. 24. || Isa. 37. 36.*  
 \* *Acts 12. 23.*



to guard the Way of the Tree of Life. Their Delight, because God's was once in their Fellow-Creature; but Sin alienating the Almighty, they too cool in their Affections toward him, and are contented to serve under Justice, tho' the severest Attribute, because equally an Attribute with Love and Goodness.

The Reflections proper here, are these.

First, I observe, that the Soul of Man was no otherwise concern'd in the dying Sen-

tence, than as she was turned

loose by it from the Body, to seek her Fortune in the wide World of Spirits. For

nothing but Dust cou'd return to Dust,

consequently not the Soul, because accord-

ing to the *Mosaic* Account of things she

was not made out of it, but infused into

the Body after it was made so \*.

God formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, 'tis

true; but he did more, viz. breathed into

him the Breath of Life. Now God not

being said to do this in the making of o-

ther Creatures, here is intimated a Differ-

ence of Original from theirs. Besides,

since of all Things belonging to us, our

Breath is most subtle, invisible, and spiri-

tual, the calling the Soul the Breath of

God, by a *Metaphor*, must signify not only

\* Boyle's *Excell. Theol. Sect. 1. Pag. 23, 25.*

its *immediate* Production by him, but its Spirituality too, that though it be not a part of the Divine Essence, yet 'tis a kind of *natural* Issue, as Breath is, and nearly resembles God. Being not then of the same Nature with the Body, neither has it the same Destiny; but, while the other falls into Earth again, *returns to God who gave it*, that is, inspir'd it, as *Solomon* observes, *Ecclesi. 12.* referring plainly to those Words of *Moses* above-mention'd. So that the *Author of Second Thoughts*, who supposes the *whole Man became mortal by Transgression*, wou'd do well to think again; and then I hope he will recal his *Second Thoughts*, as which were much too hasty to be accounted such.

*For all him* Man may be said to dye when one Part of him only dies. He dies to the World whenever Soul and Body part, because thereupon all the Enjoyments of it cease. And as the Body suffers by Death, as losing all Life and Sense, and Motion, so, setting aside Redemption, the Soul wou'd have done by the Separation which causes Death, not only as losing that Perfection of Being, and of Happiness, which it was to have only in a State of Union, but as surviving also to endure such Misery as a just God had thought fit to inflict. The Sentence of Death reached not the Spirit, because immortal by Nature; neither

ther was it necessary it shou'd, in order to the compleat Punishment of Sin, (the Drift of that Sentence) because the Spirit might be punish'd without dying. For all him too, Man may be said to be *redeem'd from Death*, notwithstanding the Supposal of a *separate Existence*, because that Existence still is but *imperfect* in Reference to the *Person*, and in a State of Sin his *Better Part*, tho' it wanted not a Revival, yet it did a Rescue from the Consequences of Death, (which indeed were worse than Death) its widow'd Condition, and the Miseries of it.

2. This general Law of *Mortality* at once shews the *Extent* of our Redemption, and the Necessity of a *dying Saviour*. An inadvertent Reader finding it written, that *Christ tasted Death for every Man*, may be apt to ask, *how* is this, when every Man tasteth Death for himself? But the *Answer* is easy, 'twas no Intention of Christ's Death to redeem us from the *Act* of dying, because that was determin'd by an irreversible Decree, but from the *State* of Death, whither the Decree reached not. The divine Justice takes its own Satisfaction in executing the original Curse upon Mankind in every Age as one Generation follows another; so *our Lord* had nothing to do here, neither pretended to satisfy Justice, which requir'd nothing more, nor to

to reverse the Curse which had taken place on so many Successions of Men already. But then the *first* Covenant having only threatned Death, it left room for a Resurrection, if it cou'd be had. Our Lord now comes in to our Relief, and makes his Resurrection an earnest and pledge of ours. Consisting as we do of Soul and Body we cou'd not be *completely* saved till they were brought together by one. But no Provision was made for *this*, and raise our selves we cou'd not from the State of Death any more than hinder our falling under it. We had therefore continu'd under it for ever, had not Christ undertook to raise us; and to do this, he must dye himself. I dare not say he might not have done it without dying, by the *absolute* Power of God, but he cou'd not according to the Establishment of Things. The *Serpent* must *bruise his Heel*, ere he cou'd *break the Serpent's Head*. To satisfy the Law then, he bore the Curse of it himself; he died; to set Bounds to the Curse and abolish Death, he arose from the Dead. His dying and his rising again as such did not do this. 'Twas the Qualifications that met in him render'd 'em effectual. The Nature he dy'd in was the Human; he was *the Son of David*; otherwise he had not suffer'd in the Nature that sinned, and how then had he redeemed it? The Nature he dy'd in was perfectly pure

pure and holy; he was the *Son of Mary*, that is, of an immaculate Virgin who conceiv'd him by the Operation of the *Holy Ghost*: Otherwise he had deserv'd to suffer on his own account, and how then had he expiated for others by suffering? The Nature he dy'd in was immortal by an *internal Principle*, and so not under the Sentence of Death; he was the *Everlasting Son of God*: Otherwise he had dy'd on course, and how then had he *made his Soul an Offering for Sin*? Otherwise he had not risen at all, much less by his own Power, and how then had he conquered Death, and given a new Life to the World? Being *God-Man* in one Person, he had every thing necessary to render his Blood acceptable and meritorious. And now that he shou'd spend his *righteous Blood* so freely for the Redemption of *Sinners*, *what manner of Love was this*? For poor Prisoners of Corruption to get the mastery over it, and to have their *whole selves* back again perfect and entire after Death, is a Blessing they cannot magnify in too high a key of Gratitude to their great Deliverer. O let us live to him who dyed that we might live.

3. I wou'd take notice what Stress of Thought that Account deserves of *Man's being Dust, and returning to Dust again*. The Words are much oftener read than  
H minded.



minded. I mean, as to their full Drift  
 and *practical* Importance. There's a deal  
 of Instruction couch'd under them. In  
 the first Application they were very forcible,  
 no doubt; they cou'd not but set *Adam's*  
 Heart a shivering, render his Spirit  
 as it were dead within him, and spread o-  
 ver his Face the sad Colours of Mortality.  
 But in regard of his Posterity, they are  
 farther *improvable* and carry greater Dint  
 of Persuasion with them. God meant 'em  
 as an Humiliation to his aspiring Genius,  
 and how do they come with double Force  
 directed to us for that purpose. For *first*,  
 we are fram'd of Dust to much greater  
 Disadvantage. *Adam* came forth from it  
 clear of all its Vilenesses, a *perfect Man*  
 the first Minute. His Body was fit for  
 Service, and prepared for the Soul to act  
 in as soon as they came together. The  
 Senses in their earliest Exercise gave full  
 Intelligence, and the strength of Age shone  
 forth in Infancy. But all these Privileges  
 of Being are quite sunk, yea, they died  
 with him. Now *Birth* and *Maturity* are  
 distant things. When first born, we know  
 as little of our selves and every thing a-  
 bout us as Brutes, and have nothing di-  
 stinguishing us from them, except a great-  
 er Inability to help our selves whether in  
 the chusing of proper Food, or the avoid-  
 ing of natural Enemies. Exceeding slow

now are the Steps of Nature. We rise into Manhood but by Inches, and while the *Animal* Life is breaking out by little and little, the *Rational* sleeps. In short, senseless, unactive Dust seems to have Power over us for a time, and, as if it were loth we shou'd get above our Original, to struggle with the Soul for Mastery. Again, our Return to the first Principles is much speedier. *Adam* indeed in the very Day of his Defection, did surely die in such a Sense as verified the Prediction that he shou'd; *that is*, a legal one, did surely and irretrievably become obnoxious to Death, as forfeiting his Life to Divine Justice; but then several hundred Years more of tolerable Youth and Activity pass'd over him e're he actually went off: (God accepting possibly in the mean time, the Life of Beasts as a Ransom for *his*; for tho' we read not that he sacrific'd, we read what makes it probable he did, *viz.* touching the *Skins* of Beasts, whose Death at that time we can put to no other account than that of sacrificing.) But hardly any since have been able to reach a Quarter of that Period, except the *Antediluvians*. But few even of them, *viz.* nine in a lineal Succession, are upon sacred Record for very long Livers, and if we may not conjecture thence, others were not so (because possibly that lineal Succession and *Noah's* De-

scant from the rest, may be the ground of the Relation) yet we may at least, that not many more were so, and that those ow'd their long Life to an extraordinary Support of Providence. \* *Josephus* affords us a Remark to ground the Supposition on, to wit, that *they* were such as were *beloved of God*, and useful too on the account of their transcendent Virtue, to keep up a Sense of Religion, and found Arts in the World. 'Tis true, the Scripture seems to confine the Invention of Arts, at least the *Mechanical*, to the Race of wicked *Cain*, and so by this Argument they may seem to come in for a share of the Privilege. But as the Scripture is silent as to that matter, so if they did, their Usefulness still allows us to conclude that *Strength of Nature* did not help 'em to it, but a *special Providence* regarding them for their Usefulness. However with us that now bring up the Rear of *Adam's* Posterity, the *pristin Crasis* of the Body is broken; and 'tis odds but by threescore we drop into the Mire. Our Declensions are oft precipitant, and some spiteful Accident or other plunges us much sooner. And now if the *Meanness* and the *Weaknesses* of Dust do thus hang about us, how ought we to take the Argument and the

Impression home to our selves, that were designed for our Progenitors in the first place? Our Condition as being a great deal worse, doth more eminently entitle us to both. And what should be the Result, but awful and *reverend* Apprehensions of the God that inhabiteth Eternity, vile and abject ones of our *little* selves that are a-kin to nothing? *Abraham* hardly knew how to take upon him to speak unto the Lord who was but *Dust and Ashes*. This Reflection laid him so low in Thought before his Maker, that even to pray unto him, and that in behalf not of himself, but others, look'd like a lesser, though pious, kind of Presumption. He therefore ushers in his Prayer with a Preface of the deepest Sense of his own Unworthiness and an Insinuation too that the Case required it. And can we be the *Sons of Abraham*, and yet forget to humble our selves daily in the Dust of the Sanctuary, and approach the Divine Presence with Solemnity, a composed Spirit and a bended Knee, in due respect to his *excellent Greatness*? What Posture so suitable in a Lump of figur'd Earth, as Prostration on it? What Demenor so comely in a Child of Corruption, as Dependence upon God? What way of Reasoning so necessary in a  *Creature of a Day*, as Submission to the Will of Providence?

There is not a Duty of our Religion, but these Considerations [*whence* we came, and *whither* we are going] one or both of them may be subservient to, in recommending it to our Judgments and our Practice. Are we Vessels of Clay? What then may the heavenly Potter challenge from us by way of Return for the Good of Being? All the Homage he can receive, or we pay. Is our first Estate a Condition of Feebleness and Incapacity? How does this lay upon us Obligations of Endearment to those that help'd to support and under-prop our fleshly Tenement till it could stand alone; nurs'd up the unfinish'd Organs of Sense and Motion, and supplied our Want of Reason with theirs? Does the best Memory get Damps from Age, and the best Judgment often sink into Ignorance or Misapprehension? *Where then is boasting? It is excluded.* For if I may one Day become an arrant Fool, I should be one already, did I bear up my self on my Learning, or my Wisdom? Shall the Earth we scornfully tread on, e're it be long proudly receive us under it, and suffer none of our Pomp to follow us. Let us then be beforehand with the Grave, and slide off from the World in our Affections. Is the Night drawing on apace, when the brightest Sun must set in Obscurity? It follows thence, that the Hours yet



yet to come, are few enough for Heaven, and the Business that tendeth thither.

Such Thoughts fall easily from the present Subject, and I please my self with reflecting that the \* *Fathers* lead the way in them. In short, there is no *Philosophy* like that we borrow from our own *Frailty*, and he that *remembers* his Beginning and *his End*, shall never do amiss.

4. 'Tis worth contemplating, how *Pride* here was prick'd in the very Nerve, made to do full *Penance* for its *Insolence* and *Vanity*. There's nothing ever observ'd to go down with it so hardly as *Contempt*, as being the Reverse of what it so much beats up and down for, *Admiration* and *Glory*. 'Tis an Heart breaking to find but its *imaginary* Merits neglected or overlook'd; but Mockeries grounded on the Supposition of no Merit, but the contrary, tease and fret it almost to Distraction. In the present Instance then it had Mortification enough. For when was that Cup of Bitterness filled out more plentifully? This bright Being forsooth! must be viewing himself all over in the flattering *Glass* of his own Fancy, with a deal of Fondness and Adoration. Here a Beauty strikes him into pleasing Wondrings, and there a Perfection cannot be enough contemplated.

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\* Patrick on Gen. 2. 7.

H 4

“Glorious

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“Glorious self! What Weight and Love-  
 “liness lieth couch’d in thee! No won-  
 “der the whole sublunary Creation obeys  
 “its Master-piece; and why do not the  
 “Angels of God worship thee? Thy Ex-  
 “cellencies sure have not a Theatre large  
 “enough to display themselves upon, and  
 “be seen at *length*, or they would be more  
 “solemnly regarded. Where would be  
 “the Glory of yonder Sun, if plac’d in  
 “such a sordid Vale as this? O what  
 “Pity ’tis, thou hast not a Post besitting  
 “thy Nature and thy Capacities? I will  
 “e’en seize one for thee in the *heavenly*  
 “*Hierarchy*. Thus he flames and plumes,  
 and flings about like a Creature beside it  
 self, and running mad with too much Hap-  
 piness. (If the *Description* of his big So-  
 liloquies be thought too fanciful, I give it  
 up, so I have the Substance of it granted  
 me, that he meant from a Man, to grow  
 into a Deity.) But the Dream of his de-  
 luded Imagination is soon over, and his  
*visionary* Schemes of rising bank’d. The  
 Hill the lofty Cedar stood upon, which he  
 deem’d so low, was found much too high for  
 him: He is therefore thrown down from  
 its serene Top, and its fair Prospect to the  
 Mire and Dirt at the Bottom; and the  
 Circumstances of his Depression are gra-  
 ting enough to go for a farther Depression  
 still. For he falls below Pity, the last Re-  
serve

serve of the miserable, and he cou'd fall no lower. The Ruins of Greatness are insupportable indeed, when attended with Pointing and Exprobations. 'Tis the sting too of an Execution for Villanies that it is publick. And how was our Malefactor drag'd out of *Eden* with all his Plague-Sores running upon him, and all his Baseness spread before him! The Judge himself has a Taunt for him, "See here! Is he not a goodly Deity of his own making? a most stupendous one; a Deity that will run into a Thicket to hide his shamesfaced Excellencies. Accomplishments come thick upon him, and in the Strength of them, if we don't look to't, he'll e'en build himself a Pillar of Glory as high as Heaven! The entertaining him thus with Irony was but a Piece of Justice due to his high-flown Pretensions. He grasp'd at Divinity, and why then shou'd he not have it ascrib'd to him in a way of Pageantry and Reproach? To abate the Wonder, let it be considered that God suffered the Crucifixion of the *second Adam*, undergone for the Offence of the *First*, to be prefac'd with greater Pomp of Scoffs and Diversion. He call'd himself a King (what he really was, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*,) and his Enemies saluted him as one, bowing the Knee before him, but it was only to dishonour him the more by a Mock-Royalty.

H 5      Now

Now if Sin in the Fulness of time was to be thus expos'd in the Person of the *Society*, why shou'd it not be first in the Person of the *Criminal*? If *true Claims* were to be abus'd in Punishment of Disobedience, 'twas but requisite the *unjust Aspirings* that occasion'd that Abuse, shou'd be punish'd after the same manner, yea, every way possible? I know indeed an easier Sense is given the Words that I refer to, by some Writers, and that they are understood to have been spoken candidly in a Dialect of Pity and Compassion to this effect. " Ah! " unhappy Man! He made himself as one " of us, assum'd an *Equality* with God, " but he lost himself by't. The Food of " Innocency will avail him no longer. " It is a Meat of too high a Taste to suit " a Stomach weak and vitiated like his; it " cannot redeem, tho' it might have once " preserv'd, him; and Immortality now " wou'd not be a Blessing. Lest there- " fore he make himself immortal, by eat- " ing it, to his still greater Misery, there's " a necessity for removing him out of " the way of the Temptation. But even this Construction leaves Punishment enough for Pride in the Divine Procedure. It supposes him pitied; and if to need Pity be an Infelicity, to give it, though a Kindness, is a Reflection. It represents him as unfit for the Place and Condition

he was in; and such a Character must be cutting to one that look'd *above* them. In short, the Degradation it self, whatever were the Circumstances, was a dismal Scene; but no sadder yet than the Case required. 'Twas fitting *Vanity* in the first Example, shou'd receive a Check, great enough to discourage future Instances. As prudent Lawgivers are severe against Leaders in Disobedience. Notwithstanding Instances have abounded in all Ages: 'Tis strange there shou'd; for what was odious in a *Creature*, is much more so in a *Sinner*; and if *Paradisiacal* Endowments, cou'd not vaunt themselves with Impunity, how dares *Frailty* be seen with tousing Imaginations about it? I can account for this only by resolving it into a too easie Notion of *Spiritual* Offences. Men commonly go for virtuous, if they are not plung'd Into Carnality, whatever their Dispositions may be. But 'tis a gross Mistake to think 'em so; for sure every one is not a *Saint* that is not quite a *Beast*. The Sins of the Mind, tho' less reproachful in the account of Men, because less visible, are much more so in the Sight of God, because more incorrigible: At least it seems as fatal in the *Event*. They threw some intelligent Creatures out of Heaven, and others out of a Place on Earth, that nearly resembled it; and me-



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methinks then we might be afraid to commit 'em upon an Apprehension they wou'd hinder our Arrival there.

4. This *severe Management* may serve for a faint Representation of the *Judgment of the Great Day*. To my Apprehension, the *Discardment* of our first Parents was with great Solemnity of Shame. The Almighty seems *for the time*, to make Musick of their Groans, and to triumph in their Misery and Disappointment. And I cannot but think too, that this *was written for our Admonition and Warning upon whom the Ends of the World are come*, to deter us from *sinning after the Similitude of their Transgression*. However what has been, shall be again; *there is nothing new unker the Sun*, or above it. Uniformity is one of the Beauties of Divine Providence; and so by looking back on its *past Transactions*, we have an Idea, and a shocking one too, of its *final Dealings with Sinners*. The accounting with *Adam*, we find to have been open, by way of Process and Accusation. Guilty Man was cited, charged, admitted to plead for himself, at last convicted and condemned, and hal'd away to feed on his Portion of Woe and Bitterness. A like Account there is in the Gospel, of the last terrible Solemnity. The opprobrious Close of his Trial, looketh too like *Anticipation*.

*on the First Transgression.* 157

*cupation.* Accordingly 'tis said in Scripture, *God will one Day laugh at our Calamity, as we have done at his Counsel, will mock when our Fear cometh as Desolation, and our Destruction as a Whirlwind. The Righteous also, God's Assessors in Judgment, shall see and laugh at the condemned World, saying, "Lo! these are the " Men that made not God their Portion, " that preferr'd jolly Madness before se- " vere Wisdom. All the while too they shall say within themselves, we Fools! have the Justice to scorn themselves for being so deservedly the Scorn of others. What an Hell then must there lie in the very manner of being doomed to it? If they might but perish unobserv'd, and have utter Darkness to conceal, whilst it afflicted them, half the Horror of Damnation wou'd be taken off by the Circumstance. But oh! unhappy and forlorn! What will they do with their guilty Heads and their confounded Faces, when the Hills they bid to fall upon them, have not the Charity to cover them? whither, oh whither can they cause their Shame to go, when the Voice of Vindictive Merriment and Derision as loud as the Trump of God, follows 'em down to the Chambers of Death.*

*Lastly, The Ministration of Angels in Adam's Banishment and Infamy, may be*

a Means of reconciling us to the most *ungrateful* Instances of our Duty. Have they ever made God's Loves and Aversions theirs, and bore an equal Respect unto all his Commandments? Was the *flaming Sword* as readily brandish'd for the Correction of *lapsed* Man, as they brought the Tidings of *Redemption* to him? What a Rebuke then is here to the Nicenesses of humane Nature, that carries it self with such Partiality and Reserve towards the Laws of Heaven? *This* Precept, forsooth, when set before us, begets a sickly Repentment, and *that* is hard of Digestion. If *Amalek* be appointed to the Slaughter by God the Judge of all, yet *SAUL* will step in with unseasonable Compassion to save many of the People. If the *Ninevites* are to be advertised touching the Demerit of their Actions, *Jonah* will not be the Messenger if he can help it, on this invidious Occasion: He runs away from Duty, leaving the Judgments of God to be their own Heralds. Thus Men *dispute* where they shou'd *obey*, and the Divine Authority goes for nothing, if the Expressions of it don't perfectly correspond with their first Thoughts, and most forward Inclinations. But how then do they follow that Pattern in their Lives which Christ has set 'em in his Prayer, *do the Will of God on Earth as it is done in Heaven*? The

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Service of Angels is a kind of *extempore* Obedience, quick as Thought, extensive as Obligation it self. The meanest, the hardest Errands as we wou'd think 'em, it seems, do not raise a Demur, or occasion a Reluctancy. And if *they* sitting in the Light of Heaven, can see nothing to be boggled at that is required of them, what have *we*, poor pur-blind Creatures, from whom the Darkness of this World shuts up the Reasons of most Things in Obscurity, to object to *any* of God's Dispensations? 'Tis a sufficient Reason for our observing of his Precepts, where we have no *other*, that they are *his* Precepts. *Whatsoever the Lord biddeth us, that we will do*, as being convinc'd, if not of the particular Equity of the thing to be done, yet of the unerring Wisdom and Goodness of him who bids us do it.

Having gone thro' the *History* of *Moses*, relating to the *Fall*, and in the Course of it, drawn out such particular Remarks as I judg'd most suitable to each particular Passage, I have nothing more to do than to maintain the *Foundation* I have been building on all this while against some Cavils and Prejudices of foolish and unreasonable Men. So the *Remainder* of the Discourse shall be taken up *mostly*, in *general* Considerations to that purpose.

C H A P.

## C H A P. VII.

*The Truth of Moses his History,  
touching the Fall.**Direct Proof.*

**T**HAT it is a real History, I make no doubt, tho' some have done out of a *free-thinking* Humour, I suppose, and in pure Loving-kindness to their Lusts and Fancies that cannot be safe, whilst the Truths of Religion are so. For has it not the Marks of History upon it? Is it not delivered in way of Narrative, as well as the rest of the *Book of Genesis*? Is it not quoted and referr'd to as History by the \* Writers of the New Testament, as well as by † *Apocryphal* Authors? Does not the Reasonableness of Christianity turn upon the Supposition of its being so? If the *Fall* is a Device, then so is the *Redemption*. Can we account if it be not so, for that *Dimness* of Understanding so lamented by the Wise; that *Proneness* of the Will to *Evil*

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\* 1 Tim. 2. 24. 2 Cor. 11. 3. Rom. 5. 19. 1 Cor. 15. 22.

† Wisd. 2. 23, Ecclus. 25. 24.



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so complained of by Good Men of all Ages; that *Vanity* of Life so admired at by *Both*; the Pangs of *Delivery* so peculiar almost to *Women* (the *Parturitions* of other Females being easie, for the most part like the falling of ripe Fruit from the Tree that produces it;) the early *Forwardness* of Children; the \* general Aversion to an appearing *Nakedness*; the strange *Shiness* and *affected* Privacy of Mankind as to *carnal* Commixtures how much soever within the Line of Honesty and good Behaviour; the *Antipathy* born to all *viperous* Animals; the *Unkindness* of the *Fruits* of the Earth; and many other *seeming* Irregularities or *Flaws* in Nature. Is it not lastly, confirm'd, not only in the *main*, but also as to the most principal *Circumstances* by the † *Heathens* themselves? They affirm *Man* to have been in a better State (both of Mind and Life) and that he did fall thence by *wilful* Miscarriages, into this Subjection to Sin and Sorrow. They give us Hints of the *Primitive Temptation* in the Account of the Envy of wicked and malignant *Demons*; they describe the *Fact* of our Mother *Eve*, and the *Event* following it, by what they say of a Woman, who, upon

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\* 2 Sam. 10. 4. &c. † Stillingf. *Orig. sacr.* B. 3. Ch. 3.

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opening a Vessel fraught with Mischiefs, dispersed out of it sad Disasters among Men. Now whether we consider the *Opinions* simply in themselves, or the Source of them, whatever it was, they give a strengthening to *our History*. If absolutely taken, they make it highly *probable*, because whatever Men *generally* consent in, is allow'd to be so. If we regard their Original, whether they had their Rise from *Moses* or primitive *Tradition*, or humane *Fancy*, they make it *rational*, because had it not been so, the Haters of holy Scripture would not have copied it thence; Men of Sense wou'd not have fram'd Notions resembling it; Primitive Tradition wou'd not have given a Suffrage to it, especially supposing the first Deliverers thereof to have been no other than the first Parents of Mankind (as we have reason, when we find no time *when*, place *where*, or manner *how* a Tradition began) who as they cou'd not be ignorant of their own Circumstances, so cou'd lie under no Inducement to deceive their Posterity concerning them.

These Arguments sufficiently prove it a Relation of *Fact*; nor is it difficult to find an Answer for all Objections to the contrary.

For first, to speak to that plausible one taken from the *Objections to* supposed Impossibility of *confuted* Adam's sinning in that State of Perfection commonly assign'd him, and thereby of giving Occasion to such an History: What tho' God made Man upright, yet still he left him in the Hands of his own Counsel. His Virgin-Purity or Innocence, does not imply he was made as perfect and excellent a Being as 'twas possible for him to be. He had without doubt, all the Perfections that are natural; otherwise he had not been qualified for the Improvement expected from him; but the being above Improvement, the being beyond Temptation was not one of them. Before we pretend to find a Creature impeccable by Nature, or that *cou'd* not Sin, we should do well to assign a Form, or a Class of Creatures that never *did* Sin; but that the Bible will not suffer, which tells us even of Angels that sinned away their Happiness. If it tells us too of some that did not, this is their Commendation, *because* they might have done so; and that they now cannot, this is their After-Reward for not doing so *when* they might.

Again, what tho' some *Scripture Parables*, that is, Fictions, look very like History? There is enough to distinguish them from History, and to shew they are not

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not Truths themselves, but only Emblems of Truths conceal'd : The very Name of Parables which generally goes along with 'em, will do *this*, the Analogy between the things represented, and the Representation of them and other Circumstances. Accordingly we find several of our Lord's Parables readily taken by his Auditors in their true and naked Sense. Some indeed, when first delivered, as namely those of *Nathan* to *David*, and of the young *Prophet* to *Ahab*, on occasion of letting go *Benhadad*, cou'd not be so distinguished ; the Design in using them had been frustrated, if they cou'd have been look'd thro' ; but then, after *that* was answered, they were discovered to be but Fictions by the Authors of them. But if *Moses* is presenting us here, only with a *practical* Truth couch'd under a formal Story, he does not tell us so, there is not the least Hint of such a Meaning. The Story is delivered as a thing really acted, and as such endeavoured to be imposed upon the Reader.

What if the *Israelites* *Moses* addresses to, were a dull and stupid People, the Description he gives 'em of the Fall, might be popular, sure, and intelligible, without being *literally untrue* : Was it reasonable the Lapse shou'd be *represented* in the manner it is, and is it not as reasonable to conclude it *happened* in that manner too, especially

cially considering it was one of the most remarkable things that ever happened to Mankind, and so ought to have been conveyed to us in a familiar easie way, just as it happen'd. Besides, admitting the Simplicity of that Nation just broke loose from *Egyptian* Bondage, requir'd it to be thus explained to them, yet I should think *St. Paul* had not that Reason for keeping close, as he does, to the *Mosaic* Language and Expressions. 'Twas time to draw the *Veil* from off the *Face of Moses* in this respect as well as others, had not the *Serpent* indeed beguiled *Eve* through his *Subtilty*.

What tho' we must allow sometimes a *Spiritual* Sense, apprehending for instance by the *Serpent* the *Devil*, (therefore call'd the *Old Serpent*, *Rev. 12.* as well as elsewhere the *Father of Lyes*, and a *Murderer from the Beginning*,) and by *Nakedness* a *Bereavement* of intellectual Graces; yet still the *literal* must not be shut out. If the *Devil* were the *Principal* in the *Temptation*, the *Serpent* was made use of as his *Instrument* or *Disguise*: And the *Mind* no sooner stood divested of its native *Ornaments*, than the *Body* felt the want of a *Covering*. Indeed both *Senses* seem to lye upon the top of the *Letter*, and offer themselves to our *Thoughts* at once; and therefore the allowing both makes not at all for the *Advocates* of *Mythology*.

What



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What if several primitive Doctors, as well *Christian* as *Jewish*, did allegorize this and some more Places of Scripture; They do not offer to juggle out the Historical Part, they maintain the matter of Fact, but will look beyond it, and ground a Moral or Type upon it. It may well be thought that *Origen* himself, who of all the *Fathers*, pleaded most for a farther reference here, lay under an unhappy Bias from his Circumstances. † The *Cabbalistic* Genius of the Age might have some Influence, but he had to do with a spiteful || Adversary that dealt in groveling Wit, and prophane Buffoonry, and his Zeal to fence against these, 'tis like, carried him out into those strange Flights and Liberties of Exposition. Rather than the *Letter* of *Genesis* shou'd be droll'd upon, he wou'd strain and amplify the *Mystery* couch'd under it. 'Twas ony *Celsus* and others of his black Complexion that peck'd at, and ridicul'd it as an *Old Wife's Fable*. And if we admit it not, we must with them throw up all reveal'd Religion, I'm afraid, as having a necessary Connexion with it. I cou'd wish however, some of the Antients had given less than they did into the my-

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† Vide *Cave's Hist. Liter.* Vol. 1. Pag. 77.  
 || Vide *Origen contra Celsum*, Lib. 4. Pag. 186, &c.

*stical* Way of interpreting, for that they gave the Enemies of Revelation, too great Advantage thereby against the Words of Scripture, to mould 'em any way, and shift 'em into every thing at pleasure. Nothing doubtless cou'd more unsettle the Meaning of holy Writ, or the Minds of Men concerning it. Understand, for Example, by *Paradise* as they did the Soul; by *Adam*, the Mind; by *Eve*, the Senses; by the *Serpent*, Pleasures, &c. and then tell me, the verbal Sense being made to stand by, what there is left for a rational Faith to build on? 'Tis not enough to say, the verbal Sense is retained still; it is put by at least to make way for fanciful Rhetorizations; and what is kept out of sight at one time, is like to be out of Mind at another, and out of regard at last. For this Reason we are told *Origen* was condemned by the *Fifth General Council*; and *St. Hieram* bestows upon this Practice no other Name than the obliging one of *Dotage*, rallying such as made use of it here, for conceiting that *Rivers and Trees and Paradise* ought to stoop to the *Rules of Allegory*;

If any thing more be necessary for vindicating the Relation, 'tis that I consider an Incongruity or two charg'd upon it. One is this, *viz.* That it represents the most

*God's cloathing Man no Diminution.*

High

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High God as condescending to *cloath* his offending Creatures with *Coats of Skins*. But why might he not do this by the Ministry and Direction of Angels, with a *Salvo* to all his infinite Perfections? The Curse had then took place upon the Heaven and Earth, so as to introduce an *Intemperature* in the Air about them; this brings with it troublesome Sensations to Flesh and Blood, and they that were easy enough once, tho' naked, are not so now, tho' in some Measure covered. In this helpless Case Providence must come in to their Relief, or they sink under the Impression, unable to bear a Change so violent and so sudden. And what Reflection then can it be, especially when we have *Moses's* Word for't, to suppose it did relieve 'em by providing a Defence from pinching killing Cold. Which of the *divine* Excellencies would be the worst for't? If we regard his *Justice*, that requir'd they should be kept in Being to have its Ends serv'd upon them. If his *Mercy*, that press'd for some Allays to Pain and Misery never felt before. If his *Grandeur*, that cou'd not sure forbid the looking after the Work of his Hands in the needful time of Trouble. As low a Stoop as this seems to be, the Son of the Highest made a much lower, when he sunk himself into Dust and Ashes to raise us up to immortal Happiness.

piness. And yet he thought his Honour safe enough still, maugre the Condescension. Ye then that wou'd seem so tender of God's Glory, have a Care ye don't lessen it by telling him how far he is to go in his *Compassions*. If he tells us how far he has gone in them, by the Mouth of his Servant inspir'd for that purpose, we surely may believe him. To do otherwise under Pretence that he cou'd not go so far with Decency, is to affront him with Solemnity, and mock him with Devotion.

As for the Difficulty grounded on *Eve's* being said to be tempted by a Serpent, I own it to be one; but then I have another to lay in the Balance against it, and alledge too as a Bar to the suppos'd Force of it, *viz.* the Difficulty of conceiving how the Scripture should come to say that, if it were not *Fact*. Nor, waving the express Assertions of Scripture, is it very improbable it should be *Fact*. For may we not imagine the Devil wou'd put on some *bodily* Appearance in order to a sensible Impression in his Addressees. To deal with us only by way of *inward Suggestion* is a Method of Management he shews his little liking to, even in these latter Days, by getting out of the Confinement, as oft as the Laws of the invi-

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sible

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sible World will let him. And we know that *exterior* Forms were taken up formerly by *Spirits* upon all Occasions of Interchange with Mankind. Now according to the learned *Mede's* Reasonings from the respective Privileges of Good and Evil Angels, an *human* one was too high for an *abused* Spirit, while Man stood in the Beauty and Loveliness of his Integrity. However it could be but imitated, and not with Probability of farthering his Design on *Eve*, who knew her self and *Adam* to be the only Instances of human kind then in the World. And among *Brutes*, what Body could he have assum'd (*really or apparently only*) so proper as the Serpents? Not to mention, again, how the Scripture seems to hint the Propriety of the Assumption, by representing that sly winding Thing as half prepar'd for the Business by his natural Gift of *Subtilty above other Beasts of the Field*, "Finite Agents acting no other-  
" wise than as the Matter they have to  
" work withal will admit ||; (tho' I know it may be said, *Moses* notes the Subtilty of this sort of *Animal*, only because he was going to speak of one of that kind.) A Serpent then, no doubt, was a glorious

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|| See the excellent *Jenkins's* Reason. of Christ. Rel. B. ii. c. 13.

Creature.



Creature. There's no guessing at the *Original Form* by the *Present* amongst us, because the *Curse* made so wide a Difference. If any can give us an Idea, it must be *the flying fiery Kind* that are seen in *Egypt*, call'd so on the account of their Splendor and Brightness. And why might not such a one, or a Serpent still more glorious; that is, the *Devil* speaking in him, hold a familiar Dialogue with *Eve*, playing lovingly as *some* have fancied, about her Neck and Arms in the State of Innocency, or lying prostrate at those Feet he was undermining, as *others*? How cou'd his Speech affright her who then knew no Sin, consequently no ground of Fear. If it were too great an Affront to her Understanding to presume her deceiv'd by his Lustre into an Opinion that he had them *naturally*, why might she not ascribe his Speech and Reasonings to the vertue of that *enlightning Fruit* he recommended as desirable to make one wise, and might be presum'd to do so from his own happy Experience? Or rather if ministring Angels us'd to appear in some such winged Form, (as Bishop *Tenison* judiciously argues from the Community of the Name *Seraph* or *Seraphin*, in Scripture us'd to denote as well a flying Serpent as an Angel; and I may farther, from the *Imagery* in the *Jewish Church*, suppos'd by him

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to have represented Angels in that manner,) why might she not take this Serpent for one of them, and so give *Attention to him as to the Son of God*, to use the Language of *Tertullian*, or some *Minister* of his Pleasure now come forth from him. And this Mistake might be promoted too by the Nature of the *first* Address, which, as it shou'd seem, was congratulatory of Happiness, and offered to rectify her Apprehensions, as which he pretended were much obstructive to it as well as reflective on the Deity, concerning the Mind of Heaven. I mention these things as *Opinions only*, and if they have something of *plausible* in them, this is enough for my Purpose, who am directing my self to the *Devout*, and not the *Curious*.

*The Serpent's Destiny,*

*The present State of the Serpent no Plea for Incredulity.* which is another Stumbling-Block to weak Minds, has been spoken to *above*; but to quiet 'em, I will offer farther two things to their Reflection. 1. That allowing it to be *inexplicable* (as indeed some Obscurity does sit upon the Face of this Dispensation) we must not therefore pronounce it *incredible*, because these are very distinct Questions, *Whether a Thing is*, and *what or how it is*? and depend not at all upon each other; there being *many* Things, the *manner*

manner of whose Existence is as much a Secret, as their Existence is a Certainty.

2. That the Infliction of Severity, where there is no Fault, has not been so rare that it should be of weight against the literal Construction of the History, wherein it is a Circumstance. For read we not, *Because God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great in the Earth, I will destroy both Man and Beast, and the creeping Things, and the Fowls of the Air?* The Beasts were no otherwise concern'd in the Guilt that cried to Heaven for Vengeance, than as Subjects of Abuse, yea they stand clear'd by the very Purport of the Sentence. It seems, because the Wickedness of Man was great on the Earth, for that and no other Reason they were to be cut off from it. Notwithstanding their Innocence, the Sentence as recorded Gen. 6. 5, 7. is allow'd to have been a real thing, and the Execution of it too, related afterwards. The Procedure in neither Case can surprize, if God owns an indisputable Authority over all his Creatures, and by thus Exercising it on Inferior ones, had an End to serve upon the Higher.

Thus the Account will bear being look'd into in every Particular; and if so, I hope Moses may be heard with Patience that gives it, or rather with great Seriousness and Reverence, as one who had the stri-

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etst Regards to Truth, and to Sincerity. In short, the *whole* carries (instead of the Shade and Dimness of a *Parable*) such an Air of Plainness and Simplicity, that a *wise Man* must acknowledge it to be the only true Account of Things, and a *good Man* wou'd be sorry it shou'd not be so.

What can we say then of  
*Some Thoughts* a *late Writer* that takes  
*on Archeologia* Advantage of its Simpli-  
*Philosophiæ.* city to impeach its Truth,  
 representing the Holy Pen-  
 man as a *Time-server* rather than an *Hi-*  
*storian.* Bless me! who will thank him  
 for his New Divinity? Is this the way to  
 save Souls, the staggering 'em in their  
 Faith? That ever a Scholar, a Christian,  
 a D--- should sit him down in the Chair  
 of Scorners, making Mirth for Atheists,  
 Libertines, and Fools! He that puts a  
 Sword into Madmen's Hands, is sadly ac-  
 cessory to all the Mischief they do with it.  
*Such* is *profane* Jestings or *Burlesque.*  
 Wherever that takes Place, 'tis not at all  
 material on what side the Truth lies, be-  
 cause it can as effectually expose what is  
 true as what is false, by rude and antick  
 Disguises. Indeed nothing else can disarm  
 Truth and Evidence; but in that wanton  
 Garb they look so unlike themselves that  
 they are not easily known again, or di-  
 stinguish'd from Error. When therefore  
 I consider

I consider *what* is said, *who* says it, and after *what manner*, together with its \* *known Influence* on a lewd and profligate Age, I cannot but call to mind the Words of Jesus, *Woe to the World because of Offences, but Woe to that Man more especially by whom the Offence cometh.* There is more than ordinary Solemnity due to the *Oracles of God*, by which we are to *live here, and to stand or fall hereafter*, and we cannot be too severe *Exacters of Gravity* in the mention of every thing relating to them. Accordingly his *Freedom*, he owns himself, have been found *displeasing* to pious Hearts, we shou'd have believed him had he added, very grievous, afflictive, shocking. After all, we will not question his Belief of *Reveal'd Religion*, because again and again he solemnly professes it, as being glad of any *Antidote* he affords us against the *Poison*. 'Tis possible he may think well of it in general, tho' he uses it so coarsely in that Particular. Yea 'tis probable his using it

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\* N. B. *The Discourse I speak of has been put into English Hands, by a Translation, and thought worthy to be collected, with other choice Pieces, into A Body of Atheism! without all doubt against the Intention of the Author, if we regard his Epistolary Postscript, and these Words in it, Ad eruditos hæc scripsimus Linguâ non vulgari, &c.*



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so coarsely in that Particular means no Disparagement, only an Endeavour to beat Men off from (what he accounts a needless, a ridiculous) adhering to *literal Constructions*. But to persuade him off if we can to *other Thoughts*, we'll confront one *Philosopher* with another, and such a one too as lay under no more Engagement on the Score of Interest or Profession, to be partial *for* the Letter, than he did to write *against* it. Mr. Boyle \* had read "so much of the Fathers, that he had form'd out of it a clear Judgment of all the eminent ones. He had read a vast deal on the Scriptures---and was a true Master in the whole Body of Divinity. And yet he "cou'd † see no just Reason to embrace their Opinion, that wou'd so turn the first Chapters of *Genesis* into Allegory, as to overthrow the historical Sence of them. Our Author, on the contrary, espouses that Opinion as what seems most *rational* and *orthodox*. Mr. Boyle, || again, declares as to his own Particular, "That when God himself is pleas'd to reveal what is--- Truth or Falshood, he had another guess

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\* See Bishop of Sarum's *Sermon at the Funeral of the Hon. Boyle*, p. 36.

† S. Boyle's *Excell. Theol.* p. 21, 24, 40, 68, 155.

|| Boyle's *Confid.* on Styl. H. Script. p. 125.

“ Acquiescence in his Decisions than in  
 “ the same met with in an human Author,  
 “ who having necessarily Frailties and  
 “ Passions, is both obnoxious to mistake  
 “ and capable to deceive. *Our Author*,  
 on the contrary, very freely chides us for  
 that when † “ we read the Doctrine of  
 “ *Moses*, we stop not at every Period,  
 “ full of Doubts and Scruples, as we shou’d  
 “ have done had we read the same in a  
 “ Rabbinical Treatise. Now supposing  
 all said *before* were to go for nothing,  
 I’m persuaded the bare Assertion of the  
 former, with all sober Judges, wou’d far  
 outweigh the Philosophizings of the latter.  
 God give him Repentance, in order to  
 what he owes the World and himself, a  
 publick Acknowledgment of the Truth.  
*O si Colloquium illud inter Evam & Ser-*  
*pentem* (septimo Capite adhibitum) &  
*quæcunque alia piis & sapientibus offendi-*  
*culo esse possint, non modo amputari &*  
*abscindi sine dolore pateretur, sed & ipse*  
*abscinderet!* In the mean while, this  
 shou’d teach us All, the *Young* especially,  
 with whom he has got a Name by writing  
 more boldly than wiser Men have done,  
 to beware of *Science falsely so called*, and  
 a too speculative Spirit, which are so much  
 to be lamented in the Person of our Author.

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 † Archæol. Phil. p. 284.

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We owe the lewd Sallies of his Pen to a strange Wantonness of Imagination. We must therefore take quite another Course than he prescribes in the *Preface* to his *Theory*; instead of extending our Thoughts too freely, or letting 'em run at large; *restrain our Souls, and keep 'em low, even as a Child that is wean'd from his Mother,* and then there is no fear but like well-bred Things they will bow to Revelation. Farther, the unhappy Use that has been made of his unadvis'd Remarks upon the present Scripture speaks the Necessity of a watchful, if not equal, Concernment for *all the Parts of our Religion*. For tho' Men shou'd deal by Religion as by a Picture, survey the *whole Piece*, contemplate all the Parts of it together in their Proportions and Correspondencies with each other, in order to frame a true Idea of its Beauty; yet 'tis too usual with them to view it Peace-meal, and if they find any one Part left naked and unguarded by the Discourse or Pens of its professed Votaries, they are prepossess'd thereby against the whole, as an ill-favour'd thing that has no Form or Comeliness that they should desire it. As we shou'd therefore engage them if we cou'd, not to content themselves with broken and imperfect Apprehensions of it, as which naturally tend to very wrong ones;

so since we cannot, it behoves us to fence it about in all its Branches, that none lye open to prejudice or Misconstruction; to weigh all our Expressions concerning it; to be tender of every Appendage, Fact, or Circumstance that belongeth to it. The treading thus warily, the giving no Handle for Jealousy or Scruple is the great Concern of a good Writer in the composing a Book, and *this is his rejoicing*, when he has finish'd it, *the Testimony of his Conscience*, that while the sincere Christian may be built up by it in our most Holy Faith, the Sceptical can borrow nothing from it to colour over his Doubts about Religion.

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## C H A P. IX.

*The whole Procedure of God vindicated touching the Fall.*

THE Conduct of Providence, in relation to the Fall is another Subject of Dispute. The Divine Wisdom, Justice and Goodness are all fallen out with upon this Oecasion. Some except to the manner of the Tryal, as it lay in an Action

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purely indifferent, the not eating of a certain Fruit in Paradise; and *others* to the *Importance* of the Tryal, as it affected in its *Consequences* the whole Race of Mankind. Now I might refer such captious Men for Satisfaction in these Matters to *absolute* Will and Pleasure, which tho' a bad Reason for the Actions of Men is a very good one for the Dispensations of God, and ought to hush us into Silence and Submission whenever we plead with him about them. For has he a Prerogative, and must we not allow something to it? Power will not be called to account if it be in bad Hands, and unless they are sure it is, I hope they will grant it shou'd not. Power indeed is not Power, if arraign'd at Pleasure upon every Surmise or Jealousy of Mismanagement.

I might also advise them rather to conclude the Equity of these Things from his known Attributes of Wisdom, Justice and Goodness (which are a strong Security to us that he wou'd not *strain* his Prerogative or oppress us with his Sovereignty) than to conclude against those Attributes or *them* upon an apprehended Difficulty of accounting for them. They shou'd go for reasonable because he did them; it being presumable that he did them because they were reasonable. For may not God have  
a reach



a reach beyond us, Depths in his Counsels which we cannot fathom, other measures to proceed by, than what lie open to our scanty Views. When a *grave Judge* determines one way, and an *ordinary Stander-by* conceits the Cause ought to have gone another, we may allow the former sure to have more Conscience than the latter has Skill. In like manner where the divine Appointments lie cross to human Understandings, this seeming Disproportion must be imputed not to Severity in the one, but Ignorance in the other. Shou'd a blind Man complain the Sun is dark because he sees not his Lustre, he wou'd find no other regard than that of Pity. But besides these *general* Considerations which shou'd be of weight with us in all Cases, some Account may be given of the *present* one, even according to our own Apprehensions of Things.

That some *Law* shou'd be laid on Man at his first Creation, *The ground of that Law in Paradise.* God's Dominion was one reason, and Man's *free* Nature was another. When an Estate is bestow'd by any Prince, the *Royalty* is still retain'd; and why might not the Governor of the Universe amidst his Bounties to his Creature reserve something as a Token of Dependence for all beside. When a Child is grown up into Sense, and a Capacity of judging and chusing for himself, there arises

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ses an Obligation of *filial* Duty, and no one blames the Parent for looking after it, and requiring it of him. And why shou'd not the Offspring of Heaven, that brought a ripe Judgment into the World with him, pay Obedience to his Maker as the First-fruits of its Exercise. 'Tis a pretty Fancy of *St. Austin*: "If a Statuary after his  
 " working an human Figure in a piece of  
 " Marble, cou'd inspire it with Life and  
 " Motion, Understanding and Speech, it  
 " wou'd immediately prostrate itself at  
 " his Feet in Thankfulness and Subjection; and I may add, that if it did not, the former wou'd soon lay it there in Displeasure. And now if an Acknowledgment of Sovereignty was due, a Trial of Obedience necessary, whereby shou'd both be made? By some high Precept of Morality as some wou'd have it? His State of Solitude, of Affluence, and of Innocence, as yet allow'd little room for this. As *Solitary*, what had he to do with exprefs Laws against Undutifulness which supposes Parents or other Superiors? Against Adultery, (the Consequence of Numbers) against Perjury, (the Concomitant of Trade and Commerce) against any ill Offices whatsoever incident to Neighbourhoods. As *abounding with every thing*, what Temptation cou'd he lie under to Theft or Robbery, (the ugly Fruits of Want and Beggary) or the doing  
 any

any thing to another he wou'd not have done by himself? As *innocent*, what unruly Lust had he to conquer, what violent Passion to subdue? The Capacity of being oblig'd by such Laws and Restraints as these, wou'd have been the result of Time, and waited Nature's leisure. The *Relations* of Society springing up about him, these Duties wou'd have sprung up with them, and not before. With a *Salvo* therefore to the *Law of Nature* before given, a *positive* one might be added, because, tho' the former afforded Direction in all Cases relating to God and Man, yet *Adam's* Circumstances rendred those Directions in a manner useless for the present.

But suppose something *Moral* had been practicable, yet how was it proper for the purpose of testifying Obedience? For Morality lies in the very Nature of Things, and so needs not a positive Command to enforce it upon the Conscience; consequently Actions of this kind might have been done for their intrinsic Comeliness, and in Compliance with his own Reason, rather than in respect to the exprefs Stamp of *divine Authority* upon them. For his Probation therefore whether he wou'd obey God or no, meerly for Obedience sake, 'twas requisite something shou'd be commanded or forbidden that was neither good nor evil, but only as it was commanded or for-

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forbidden. When the declar'd Will of God only made it so, 'twou'd appear he did or he forbore it only out of an awful Regard to that Will and that Authority. And if the doing or forbearance of a thing indifferent was most suitable by way of *Test*, what cou'd be more so to an Inhabitant of Paradise than the forbearance of a certain Fruit there that he needed only reach out his Hand and take, such a Fruit as had Charms enough to shake a Resolution of Self-denial, or to credit it? For it seem'd to make an offer of two things the most desirable, *Pleasure* and *Knowledge*. We feel a quick and earnest Thirst after these in our selves; and in such Things as are purely Natural we may judge of *Adam* by our selves: For Nature is the same in all. So that here it wou'd be soon seen whether he cou'd make a Sacrifice of his Nature to his Conscience. Restraints from other things there might have been more out of the way, but none cou'd have lain readier for Observance than *this*, considering the Place and his manner of living in it.

His very Senses were Remembrancers to him of his Duty, even while they set him so much against it. And let me add (in its Commendation) that tho' it carried no other Motive for his Compliance but the bare force of uncontrollable Authority, it yet *implicitly* engag'd to the Exercise of many

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many moral Virtues, as, Affiance, Gratitude, Contentment, Temperance; That tho' it was not a Part of the Law of Nature, it was ground'd upon something which was, *viz. an Obligation not to do what God forbids*, the which, if the matter of the Law were really light and trivial, added the greatest Weight to it, because God's Power wou'd be equally struck at, his Truth arraign'd, and Goodness slighted, was the Instance he offended in, less or greater.

In the manner of Trial then, I see nothing at all derogatory from God; but I can't suffer my self to go on 'till I've made a By-Reflection in Favour of our most holy Religion. For if the State of Innocency was subject to a Rule of acting, and such a Rule too, as was resolveable into the pure Will and Pleasure of the Law-giver, what has *laps'd* Humanity to complain of under the check of Laws and Government? Did the Almighty exercise his Legislative Authority on a *Righteous Man* who was able enough to be a Law unto himself, and may he not much rather on the Lawless and Ungodly. As the Sick can have no just Quarrel to Physick, when Men in Health are expected to take it upon Occasion. Did a Sense of Bounties receiv'd oblige the one *cheerfully* to fulfil a Duty laid upon him, the  
Matter

*A Practical  
Meditation.*



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Matter whereof was indifferent, and so good *only because commanded?* And shall not the Experience of Mercy added to Bounties engage the other *contentedly* to acquiesce *under* Duties, the Matter whereof is Moral, and so good, *tho' it had not been commanded?* We indeed are obliged too to things indifferent in themselves, such as derive their whole Power of obliging, and value from the Command of God, namely, the *Two Sacraments* of the *Christian Church*. But what are these Rites for Burden or Severity in Comparison with the *primitive* Imposition? 'Tis easier sure to eat Consecrated Bread, and drink *Eucharistick* Wine in *Remembrance* of a *Saviour*, than to forbear eating the most lovely Fruit of Paradise in Obedience to a *Creator*, especially considering that that *Commemorative Act* is not more a Duty than it will be a Blessing, as being *the Communion of the Body and Blood* of that very *Saviour*, with all the dear *spiritual Effects* of his *Crucifixion*. And after this, I need say no more to endear *Christianity* to the *Thankful*.

The *Congruity* of this *Probatory Law*, I hope has been sufficiently demonstrated. Notwithstanding, some will ask, *Why* did God suffer it to be broken or impose it, knowing afore-hand that it would be so? *Why* were not the *Apostate* Spirits that occasioned the Breach, chain'd up from mischief

Mischief? *Why* was not Omnipotence, that so much display'd it self in the *Make* of *Man*, exerted a little in his Preservation? In the Words of *Esdra*s to the *Angel*, *B. 2. C. 7.* *Had it not been better not to have given the Earth unto Adam, or else when it was given, to have restrain'd him from sinning?* But for answer to these Questions, I shall propose one or two, ridiculous enough, yet every whit as pertinent. *Why* were the several Beings in the Universe framed in a wonderful Order and Gradation of Excellencies? *Why* was Man left free and uncon-

God acquitted from being the Author of Adam's Sin.

firm'd in Goodness; that is, why not another kind of Creature from what he is, or rather why a Creature at all? Creatures surely of different Natures shou'd be allow'd to act suitably to their Natures, or the particular *Design* of their Creation is baulk'd; but *Adam* must not have acted so, had he been restrained from acting as he did, because Restraint and Freedom are inconsistent. 'Twas enough for God to do every thing proper on this side forcible Restraint, and a flat Necessity, to prevent the Abuse of his Freedom. And he did all this by providing him a clear and enlightned Understanding, prepared consequently to discover the Fallacies and

Inside

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Inside of a Temptation; by pre-engaging his Will to Good, which it could not therefore turn aside from without Reluctancy; by giving him Desires and Fears exactly proportion'd to the Nature of Things; by hedging about his Law with Threats and Promises that might work upon those Passions to its Advantage and Security; by encouraging him, *lastly*, if the Grace he receiv'd in the Creation, should prove too little, to pray for *more*. And if when God had done *so much*, that is, all that was requisite on his Part, Man wou'd not do *his*, that is, be directed by a Rule, and persuaded by sufficient Motives, and in order thereto, keep his Brains stirring, his Apprehension wakeful, and his Senses under Discipline, the Evil that followed must be wholly plac'd to the account of a wilful Stubbornness, and not of a permissive Providence. Being so well fortified, he might well be trusted with himself, and left upon his good Behaviour.

The *Fruit*, 'tis true, had Beauty for the Eye, and perhaps Sweetness for the Palate, yet it was still but an *External* Object, and as such might have been rejected. The *good Angels* did not *violently* interpose to hinder the Attempts of *evil* ones. The latter were as far from violently over-ruling his Affections. God did not hold him up by *Force*, when, in the  
Divine

Divine Prescience, he was sure to fall without it. But still there was no Substraction of any Power necessary to his standing. God only let him use the Privilege of his Nature, the Power of Self-Determination, and he abused it, and of this he must bear the Blame for ever. As 'tis no Stain to a Prince, that his Servants having Weapons in their Hands to resist his Enemies, cast them down and yield. He is to give them Armour, but they are to give themselves Resolution. But to let in a little more Light upon the Matter by another Comparison: In the building of an House, (says one) it is needful that for Use and Convenience, it have a Door, which is made of sufficient Strength to keep out Thieves, so there be sufficient Care in shutting it. Now if the Thief by artful Persuasion, and not by Violence, gets Admittance and steals, whose is the Fault? Not the Workman's sure that made the Doors, but the Inhabitants that sets 'em open. The Application is, that tho' Free Will, which was the Gift of God, prov'd an unhappy Inlet of Sin and Misery, yet because it was necessary in regard of the Station *Man* had assign'd him among the Creatures, the *un-intended* accidental Consequence reflected not on God, but him only who shou'd have better guarded that Avenue by which he was betray'd and undone.

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done. Add to all this, that had he been incapable of Sin, he had been so of Vertue too, because Vertue implies *choice*, (there being no Reward or Praise due for doing that which we cannot chuse but do; as no Body that has the Sense of a Man, goes about to *applaud* the Innocence of a *Brute*, or Flower) and Choice implies a *Capacity of Sinning*. I doubt not upon the Supposition he had not sinn'd, by chusing well when he might have chosen ill, he'd have thank'd God no less for allowing him that high Satisfaction and Honour of co-operating to his own Felicity; as 'tis more agreeable to mount by our own Motion, than to be lifted up. And I'm sure, for that he sinn'd, he cou'd not blame God with Justice, who gave him sufficient Strength of Will to maintain his Innocence; nor yet for punishing the Sin, because the Punishment being denounced before its Commission was intended to withhold from committing it, rather than revenge it, if committed, and actually had so withheld, but for his *Inadvertence*; and therefore since it did not, it might reasonably enough revenge the bold Commission, to shew an *holy* God was not unconcern'd whether his Creature was so or no.

Well,



*vindicated touching the Fall.* 191

Well, but after all, was the Eating of an Apple such a *big* Story, that it shou'd deserve such a Weight of Censure to be laid upon it? Upon the hearing of those solemn Speeches from the Mouth of Majesty, [*What is this that thou hast done, and because thou hast done this,* such and such Things shall be done unto thee] one of which is a *Scheme of Admiration*, and implies somewhat very exaggerating, wou'd one not conclude the *thing done*, were some very heinous Offence indeed? Yes one would, no doubt, if he had any Deference for infinite Wisdom; and it really was so, notwithstanding any contrary Apprehensions of vain Man. When God had laid his Hands upon a certain thing and said, *This is mine*; how dar'd a Creature perch up and say the quite contrary, by invading it? The Tree climb'd, 'tis true, and the Fruit tasted, present but a low Idea of the Sin; but then the Heinousness hereof, confessedly, is not to be sought for thence, but in the things implied thereby, viz. the Braving the *Divine Justice*, as tho' a Sinner cou'd secure himself from its Impressions; the Denial of the *Divine Veracity*, as if the Threatnings were an idle Terror only to scare the Fearful; the Contempt of the *Divine Goodness*, as though there had not been

Adam's Sin  
a complicated  
Guilt.

been Kindness enough shown to invite Obedience; the Impeachment of the Divine *Wisdom*, as if the Deity had not foreseen what Liberty was fit to be allow'd a Vessel of Clay; and the Affectation of the Divine *Dignity* and Likeness, as if Heaven might be taken literally by Violence, and the great God that sate enthroned there, ought to be jostled out for not stooping his Hand to raise the Ambitious up to the Chair of Majesty. These are the true Topics of Aggravation, and if we take measure by them, what must be the Bulk of the Transgression! "Oh *Adam*, what was  
 " this that thou didst do? no less in effect  
 " than violate the whole Duty of Man.  
 " Iniquity cou'd go no farther. To little  
 " purpose was such an inestimable Treasure of Blessings thrown into thy Lap.  
 " Thou didst use it so hardly, that you  
 " discouraged it to stay with you. To  
 " talk therefore of Peccadillo's, and harangue upon the eating of an Apple, is  
 " but to repeat over thy foolish Acting,  
 " and bring *Figleaves* again, which will  
 " no more hide thy Sin, than thine did  
 " thy Nakedness.

There have been many Cases of the like, that is, *seemingly* slight Nature, that yet were not slight. God animadverted tho' not for the *Fact*, yet for the *Disobedience*. To instance in *the gathering of Sticks on*  
 the

*the Sabbath-day in Israel.* That was positively forbid, and therefore it was severely punish'd. As also in the *Rebuilding of raz'd Jericho.* There had been a *Prophetick Order* to the contrary, and therefore the Work, otherwise innocent, yea publick-spirited, entail'd a Judgment on the *Children of the Restorer.* Consequently in estimating *Adam's Guilt*, we are not to consider so much *what* he did, as his *Design* in doing it, and the Majesty of Him he affronted by it. Besides (to pass over these Arguments) allowing it were but a small thing to purloin the sacred Fruit, it had been so too to forbear. And he that was not *faithful* in a little, how wou'd he have been in *much*? Thus under every Aspect, the pretended Peccadillo has an Air of Ghastliness, and therefore nothing cou'd have excus'd my bringing it so much in view, but an Endeavour to vindicate Heaven in putting it to Shame for its Enormity.

Farther, if the *Per-*  
*mission* of the *Fall* were of  
*doubtful* Construction, *The Prospect of*  
we are to consider that a *Recovery open'd*  
*just upon the Fall.*  
*Reparation* of it *immedi-*  
*ately* came from God, upon the *healing*  
*Wings of the Sun of Righteousness.* No sooner had God found Guilt upon our first Parents, but he promises, he reaches out a

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Remedy, making the very Curse on the Serpent, a Blessing to them. *I will put Enmity, &c.* What that Blessing was, I more than intimated formerly, when I spake to the several Parts of the *Divine Malediction*, viz. an Assurance of ghostly Aid and Deliverance; that tho' Satan had foiled them in, or by the Serpent, yet he should not finally prevail to Man's Destruction. So the very Context (*Authority aside*) will interpret for us the Promise of the *Seed of the Woman*; for we find it antecedent to the temporal Judgments denounced on them for their Offence, consequently it cannot signify a Release or Mitigation of those Judgments (for if any of them were taken off or softned, why should they be denounced afterwards in the fullest Terms?) consequently it must signify something *Spiritual, Divine, and Heavenly*. Nor can I see, if it meant a Favour, how it cou'd mean any but the greatest, that is, a new Title to Grace and Immortality, because none short of that, cou'd any thing avail Adam at that time, that is, support him under the weight of the Curse that follow'd \*. The Guard of Angels set at the Entrance of Eden, after his Expulsion thence, told him plainly,

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\* See this well explained by Mr. Milbourn, in his Book call'd, *Myster. in Relig.* Pag. 606.  
all

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all hopes of Life by the Terms of the *first Covenant* were cut off for ever; and to disperse the Clouds, this Apprehension rais'd in him, ask'd some *Prophetical* Dawnings at least of eternal Day. And this suggests a good Reason for thus timing the Delivery of the Promise, to wit, *the Prevention of Despair*. Had the Promise come last, it might have come too late to invite Repentance. *Adam* might have been wanting to himself in the Application; his Doom would have been apt to add Distrust to Presumption, and so disabled him from prosecuting the things that belonged to his Peace with Heaven. But it coming first prepar'd, and arm'd him for the Sentence of Death, and while he had the Hopes of departing in God's Favour, and coming thro' Faith in his Promises, unto Life eternal, he could not but entertain the good Thought of living in his Fear, and to his Honour for the future. Accordingly we doubt not with the *Fathers*, *Adam* repented and was saved. \* One of them professedly maintain'd this as a certain Truth, in opposition to *Tatian*. Nor do I think it any Argument to the contrary, that his Story closeth with his *Punishment* †. For 'tis usual with the Holy Ghost in Scripture, while he regi-

\* *Iraeneus*.

† Gen. 5 5.



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sters Mens Faults, to cast a Veil over their Repentance: For this end, possibly, that the-leaving 'em unjustified in this World, as a temporary Punishment for those Faults, might prevent their being accounted for in another, so as to occasion an Abatement of their eternal Happiness. Thus Noah's Drunkenness ends his *Moral* Character. After the Account of *Lot's* Incest, we hear no more of him. After the Relation of \* *Solomon's* Idolatry, it follows, *And Solomon slept with his Fathers*; as if he carried it to the Grave with him. And yet their † elsewhere-Characters after Death, forbid us to give 'em up for lost to Religion and to Happiness.

Behold therefore the Goodness and Severity of God. Goodness in allotting Man a Free-Will and a Temptation for his Trial, that he might have the Credit, if he pleas'd of a Share in making himself happy; Severity in-permitting him, when he was not circumspect enough, to be foil'd for his Punishment. Goodness again, in lending an Hand for his Recovery, that is, Goodness that wou'd not be damm'd up, but when obstructed one way, broke out another.

\* 1 Kings 11. 2, 43.

† Ezek. 14. 14.

2 Chron. 11. 17.

God

God did but permit the Fall, he did not *absolutely* decree it as a Means he might make use of to set forth his Power in the Misery of his Creature. This (to view it as a Fiction of Fancy, which one can hardly do without bordering upon Blasphemy) had been a very ungod-like Thing indeed: It wou'd be the same but in a lower Instance, shou'd an absolute Monarch set one on the Top-Pinnacle of Honour, with this Intent purely to give himself the ill-natur'd Pleasure of throwing him back into his first Obscurity, or into worse Circumstances than those wherein he found him. Neither did he so much as permit the Fall in the strict Sense of the Word in which it differs little from a plain Command. He permitted it only as the *Man in the Parable* permitted his younger Son to range in *strange Countries*. The Son had his Portion of Goods put in his own Hands, and was then turn'd over wholly to his own Conduct. *Adam* had the same Allowance (whom accordingly some of the Ancients understood by that Person). The Mismanagement in the one Case, was no part of the Father's Purpose, nor the Fall in the other of God's. Only the former gave the Father an Occasion of entertaining the *Prodigal* with Joy at his Return, and killing the fatted Calf for his better Welcome. Only the latter gave the Divine

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Goodness an Opportunity for hovering and melting in Tears as 'twere over a weak and fallen Child which Justice threatned so terribly. Both were foreseen; *That* by probable Conjectures from the natural Course of Things, *This* with absolute Certainty, the Prerogative of Omniscience. But the Fore-knowledge that *so it wou'd be*, was no Cause or so much as an Occasion that *so it should be*, had no necessitating Influence on what follow'd. It did but set Mercy on work to provide a Remedy.

*Useful Reflections on the Promise of a Saviour.*

By the way, the *Providing of a Remedy* was a most becoming Condescension in the Almighty. I cannot say he was bound to do this by any other Tye than that of his *eternal Purpose*. But I may say, nothing cou'd have secur'd the Credit of the Divine Attributes, otherwise perhaps somewhat liable to Misconstruction, better than this. For how could he have so soon destroyed a Creature he so lately made, without some Reproach to his Wisdom in making him? *I speak after the manner of Men*, and their common Reasonings. Would he not have seem'd, by managing in this manner, to make only to destroy, like an *humorous Artist* that lays out his utmost Skill upon a curious Engine, and

and when he has finished it, instantly quarrels it to pieces again? Besides, the Destruction of the *Individual*, had been the Destruction too of the *kind* or *Species*. *Apostate Spirits* cou'd be well spar'd when adjudg'd to Perdition, because Myriads of *blessed* ones abode still in the *Heaven of Presence*, to chaunt out Anthems of Praise and Hallelujahs, and go in and out before the *Glory of the Holy One*. On the contrary, one of the *first* had been the *last Day* of the *Humane Nature*, upon the Supposition of *Adam's* immediate Death, who was to propagate it. Or, put the Case he had had a Reprieve from Ruine, he had liv'd only to bring a Race of Wretches into a *bad World*, that in time they wou'd successively have exchange'd for a worie, if involv'd in his sad Destiny. And what an odd Impression must it have made on the rest of the Rational Creation, to see a whole Rank of reasonable Beings given up to Death and to Corruption? How wou'd the *good Angels*, tho' silently, have turn'd away their Eyes from the hidden Depths of Divine Justice, as fearing they shou'd be confounded in the Reflection; as concerned, tho' with Submission, that God should alway apply to Rigour upon the Provocations of his Creatures, who never needed to do so, to maintain his Crown and Regalia, or guard his Station? How wou'd

they have tun'd their Harps to the Strains of Sorrow, as despairing ever to have their *broken* Numbers recruited, the lamented *Vacancies* fill'd up in the *Seats of Blessedness*! How wou'd the *Bad* have triumph'd in an Event that so sweetly answered their Endeavours of drawing off more *Subjects* still from their Allegiance and their Happiness? How pleas'd had they been, reflecting on their own Case, that they had no Pardon, *probably* because they had no Tempter, to find Temptation it self not allow'd in poor Man's Case as a Circumstance of Mitigation? These Reflections are but natural upon an *imaginary* View of *Adam* and his *Descendents* in an *abandoned* State. But all Perplexities of Thought and Insults, that might have risen upon a *real one*, were prevented, by the interposal of a *Deliverance*. Now the sweet Singers of the new *Jerusalem* promise themselves a mighty Addition to their *Quire*; now the elder Sons of Wickedness sit pining in the Valley of Death at the Sight of the *Flaming Sword* that is set before it to direct their Fellow Creatures unto Glory whom it formerly kept out of Paradise. And very fit it was that hungry Envy shou'd lose its Longing to dispirit it for the future. Notwithstanding it still goes about seeking whom it may devour. But then it devours none but such as wilfully become  
a Prey



a Prey unto it. Leave off then all ye Workers of Iniquity tempting, corrupting, and laying Snares for Souls. If Ruin be your Business, there's some Ground to hope you will not get it done, and that those you corrupt *here*, may by some kind way of Providence or other be kept from being tormented *hereafter*. The vile Master you work under was defeated at his first setting out on Mischief; he wounded indeed, and that in a thousand *Places* and *Concernments*, but not *fatally*: And I know not why you should reckon on any other Reward for your *pious Labours* than to see the *Innocents*, you'd fain make otherwise, amidst *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and all the *Saints* in the Kingdom of God, whilst you your selves are shut out into eternal Horror and Darkness.

2. I observe with \*Dr. *Alix*, how the *Nature* of the Remedy had a very kind Aspect upon the *Marriage-State*. Eve's decoying *Adam* into an Action so unlawful, and so big with evil Consequences, naturally tended to disunite 'em. He cou'd not easily have prevail'd with himself to love and live on with a Partner who had injur'd him in the greatest and most tender Interests. We may imagine Rencounters of Passion upon the *Fall*, at

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\* *Reflections upon Gen. i. p. 51.*

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least Estrangedness and Indifference. The unfortunate Sally drove deep into the Mind, and the Sweets of Society and of being mutually acceptable, pall'd a-pace. But these things were not lasting. God removes the Ground of them by making *Eve* the happy, tho' remote, *Instrument* of conveying Grace and Redemption to Mankind. A Re-Union with her becomes necessary in order to it, and so the Breach is made up again. Henceforward they go on lovingly together in the Road of Life, as Travellers that have need one of the other, and contentedly share the common Burden of Mortality now sweetned to them. Disgusts are no more, but every thing smooth and smiling betwixt 'em. For so we read, *And Adam knew his Wife: And she conceiv'd and bare him Cain, and said, I have gotten a Man from the Lord.* It seems, they understood the Promise aright in general, as intimating one should descend from them that shou'd repair their Losses, and so agreed to do their part toward fulfilling it. Its being expressed in general Terms, led *Eve* to apply it to her *First-born*. And this, tho' a Mistake, turned to good, in drawing the Union still closer, and heightning the Comfort of the Relation.

3. *The Earliness* in revealing that Remedy, hints to us an important Part of the

the ministerial Duty which lies in declaring seasonably God's Mercies to the Penitent. When a Person has transgress'd, the first Application in order to reform him, must be kind, chearful and encouraging, not (as 'tis sometimes, thro' a rough and vehement Disposition in the Speaker) fierce and terrifying. For Reformation is both a *reasonable* and an *ingenuous* Change. A Sinner before he'll reform, will be made sensible he shall be the better for it; but naked and untemper'd Menaces, will not do this. And if he reforms in earnest, he does so upon a Principle of Love to God, who has been dishonour'd by his Transgression: But he can't love him whose Favour he distrusts; he must therefore have some Notion of the Goodness of God in general, and of a Disposition too in God to be good and gracious to him in particular. This may melt and soften him into Tears of Contrition; and when he sees a *Pardon* coming toward him, his Heart will go out to meet it with Submissions. The Apprehension, on the other Hand, of a stern and ghastly Majesty, that *Nimrod* like hunts out all the Game he can to sport and breathe his Vengeance for ever, damps Affection, and benumbs Endeavour. And if we are not strongly persuaded we shall receive Good for ceasing from Evil, we continue doing Evil. *Adam* himself

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while he was in Suspense about Forgiveness seems to have been so too about Repentance. Why else did he so shuffle with Guilt, and make Heaven itself a Party in his Folly? But that he might not be long in doubt as to either, in the midst of Judgment God remembers Mercy, or rather introduces Judgment with it. And what is *this* but a tacit *Directory* for all future *Preachers of Righteousness* in transacting with Sinners? How shou'd they qualify the Rigours and Curses of the Law with the Grace and Consolations of the Gospel? While they *whisper* the one, *proclaim* the other? How shou'd they invite them to *hear what comfortable Words our Saviour saith to all that truly turn to him*, and then repeat 'em tenderly before them, making Tears, if they can, part of their Oratory, *Come unto me all that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you*. Hereby those Persons perhaps may be drawn, who wou'd not be driven into his Service. And if the *still Voice* can awaken, what need of the stormy Wind and Thunder? I say, if the still Voice can do: For still where Men will not *hear* Rebuke, they must *feel* it. Good is not always to be done by *Lenitives*. Some are too far gone in their Ails to have a thorow Cure wrought on them without a Lancing. And in this Case, the Severity of a faithful Surgeon may be us'd to let out the

the Corruption. As God himself is generally thought to have spoke *sarcastically* to bring *Adam* to himself.

I judge it no impertinent *Digression* now I'm upon the Subject of *Reproof*, to touch on *another* Circumstance instructive to that Purpose, the *Season of God's Animadversion*. God treated with *Adam* about his *Miscarriage in the cool of the Day*, or towards the Evening, that is, as it shou'd seem, not immediately as soon as it was committed, during the uproar of the Affections, but at some convenient Distance, and after some Interval of Recollection. He meant to recover him who had lost himself, and therefore, that he might gain Attention to his Address, he waits a fitting and a cool time for it. Had he come down earlier than he did, he had found him exceedingly ruffled and discompos'd, like to a troubled Sea that cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt, and, the Mud having not time to settle again, had had, 'tis like, a deal of it cast upon himself. The Offender, notwithstanding that Interval of Reflection, cou'd lay Filth taken from his own Dung-hil at the Door of Providence. And thence we may guess how very foul mouth'd he had been, if arrested in his first Transports. Here then is *another Rule* for the Management of *Censure* and *Admonition*, That it be *well-tim'd*, in the soft and easy Hours of speaking,



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speaking, when all is quiet and temperate within. For 'tis Mens Reason we have to deal withal; but while the Passions are up, that is down and cannot be heard, or (what is worse) is brib'd by Passion to justify its Excesses. A Reproof just upon the Act of a Sin, is like administering Physick in the Paroxysm or Extremity of a Disease, exasperates instead of curing. When the first Violence of the Disorder is over, it will be more tractable and endure the handling.

As for the Evils *Adam's Account* was not excus'd from in his Afflictions. bearing, they were no less Salutory than Penal. A sad Change it was to be great, vigorous, happy one Moment, little, decrepit, contemptible the next; as the Gloom of Midnight seems the more horrid after the Noon-day Glories, and really wou'd be so, if we pass'd on the sudden out of the one into the other without a preparing Interval. But his heavenly Father knew what need he had of these things, that as his Ruin was by *Pride*, so his Recovery cou'd be only by *Humility*. The earthly one, to reclaim a disobedient Son that has been revelling away his Time and his Innocence, gives order his Tenants shou'd treat him ill, affront and chase him from them. Debauch'd Man was handled as coarsely by inferior Nature

Nature in order to his *Reduction*. Had he sat in the Sun any longer, he might probably have luxuriated and run riot again; and so the *Shade* was much the fittest for him; as seldom any thing grows upon *lusty Ground* but what is fit to be rooted up. However without thus *shifting the Scene*, one *side* of his *Virtue*, that is, the *Passive*, could not have been seen; and therefore it was well for him that Temptations of the rougher kind succeeded the softer ones. The *Curtain* being drawn before his former *Glories*, he was at leisure to collect and read himself, to look inwards on the deformed Images of his *Folly*, and see he had been as base as he now was miserable. And this reconciles him to his *Condition*, and to his *God*.

The general Influence of *Adam's Sin*, or its remaining a Debt upon his *Posterity*, is a thing that sounds very

*Good Constructions upon the Consequences of Adam's Sin to his Posterity.*

harsh to some tender Ears, but I'm persuaded they wou'd not tingle half so much as they do at the hearing of it, if the Matter were considered with *Coolness and Temper*. For,

What tho' *Adam* lost *Paradise* not only for himself, but the future Race of Mankind by his

*The Extinction of Paradise no Injury.*

*Disobe-*

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Disobedience? This was the Gift of God, and might he not bestow it on his own Terms, and resume it too at Pleasure? Men on Earth, if they make over Possessions to another and his Heirs *conditionally*, scruple not to take the Forfeit, the Condition lying unperform'd. And shou'd the Paramount Lord of all be tyed up from acting by the same approved Measures? Besides there was a Reason for recalling this Gift, its *accidental Unsuitableness*. *Eden* was made for Man in Innocency; and wou'd we have the World now an *Eden*, tho' there is not an innocent Man in it; that is, tho' that be wanting which shou'd make it so? Indeed God opened a Way to retrieve in some measure the *primitive Portions* of its Happiness, and tune it again to its *native Harmony*. *Christianity* came from Heaven for that purpose, and had it been *universally* welcomed and obeyed, it had brought down the Joys of Heaven with it. But because it has never been so, Mankind has never seen what it cou'd do in a way of *Reparation*. And who must be thank'd for that? Felicity and Vertue, being embark'd in the same Bottom, they must both of them run the same Fate, and either swim or sink together. Let us all but agree to make the wish'd for Experiment, be but as *good* as we can be, and we shall soon become

come as happy as we desire to be. Yea, without a concurrent Change of the *World abroad*, which we may long enough wait for, every *single* Person has this in his own Power. He need ask leave of none but God and himself to have a *Conscience void of Offence*, and that as it is greater than all other Pleasures, so it will serve *instead of them*. It indeed gives the Place where it dwells, if not the *Face*, yet much of the *Substance of Paradise*.

What tho' *Propensions*

to evil descended along with the human Nature?

They are not *infus'd* by the Author of it, but

oweing to the vitiated

State of the *common Stock*; as when the Sun shineth on a Dunghil, 'tis the Beams of the one that make the Scent, but 'tis the Rottenness of the other that make that Scent noisom. And may not God suffer things to take their Natural Course?

An Hereditary Disorder of Body is held no Blenish at all on Providence: Why then shou'd an Hereditary *Depravation* of Will be accounted so, especially considering, that *Baptism* gives us a foederal Right to such divine Aids as are sufficient to master it. By partaking of *Adam's Nature*, we partake also of his Corruption. For so argues *Job*, *Who can*

*The Propagation of evil Concupiscence no Stain upon our Maker.*

*bring*

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bring a clean thing out of an unclean? intimating thereby; that nothing short of Miracle cou'd do that; as we know nothing else did in the Case of our *Blessed Lord's immaculate Conception*. There was certainly no natural way of preventing the Descent of Corruption, whilst there was the Descent of Nature; and I hope no one will presume to say, it had been better to create a *new* Head for Mankind, than continue the *present* One, and lay the great Design he did for their Relief in a Mediator. Besides there is Gold in the Mass of Ore, tho' mixt with a greater Quantity of Dross and Sand. Nature has scatter'd in us the *Seeds* of Vertue, and therefore if no *Harvest* follows, 'tis not *Nature* but *We* are unprofitable. And as for that *Complexional* Inclination to *this* or *that* particular Vice which all lie under, it is vincible by *Grace*: Pray but against it, and remove from the Object that beckens to it, and it languishes or sleeps: As a Bowl may lie still for all its Bias. Indeed the *Motus primo primu*, the *first* stirrings of Concupiscence stay not for the Consent of the Will, much less for the Succours of the Spirit, and yet, as an Article of *our Church* expresses it, *they have in them the Nature of Sin*, because *irregular* and opposite to the Perfection of the Divine Law and Nature; but then they have not the *Punishment* of Sin.

*final*



*vindicated touching the Fall.* 211

finally, thro' the Mercies of God, because *involuntary* and unavoidable. Consequently there is no need to bewail 'em otherwise than in a *general Confession*, and on the account of that Irregularity and Opposition to the perfect Will of God, which may be *devoutly* adored, even when it cannot be *exactly* fulfill'd.

The mention of the Article puts me in mind of the too *frequent* Outrages against it. But as I have own'd it already, and do pursue the *Design* of it under the following *Considerations*, so I hope my *Youth* and my *practical* Purpose will excuse my not launching out into Controversy. That our Nature is corrupt, Reason, back'd with a too sensible Experience, witnesses; and they who deny the thing give the blackest Instance of it in themselves. That the Corruption of our Nature had its Rise from some *Depravity* in those that first propagated it, Reason easily conceives, because the Effect being *general* the Cause must be so too. That this Corruption is in some Sence sinful, that is, *something that ought not to be*, a Deflection from the Rule of Duty, and an Object of God's Aversion, Reason can't gainsay, especially considering, that 'tis the Principle of Moral Evil, and the fruitful Mother of Iniquity. All that can be pleaded to the contrary is the Involuntariness of it. But all Sins of In-

fir.

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firmity have this Circumstance, and yet in common Reckoning they are Sins, tho' of a lesser kind. Now if such Concessions can be had from natural Light, the way is pav'd for Holy Writ to come in with its express Assertions and unanswerable Authority: which observes that lapsed *Adam*\* begat a Son in his own Likeness, after his Image, consequently a Sinner, because he now was one himself; which describing the common Condition of all Men's Birth by *David*'s, makes it to be this, viz. the being † *shapen in Iniquity and conceived in Sin*; which seems to make the || Headship of *Adam* and of *Christ* to run parallel, in the Instance of a public Capacity or Representation, in the universal Imputation of Sin and of Righteousness, and in the Effects of both. If you'd have more Scripture upon the Argument and the Suffrage of *Antiquity* besides, I must refer you to \* those that have travell'd farther in it. All I shall add, is a Word to such as lay too great a Stress, on the adverse side; on what they conceive of the Divine Nature and Actings, namely, that 'twere easy to show how uncertain our Arguings thence are without a Revelation, much more,

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\* Gen. 5. † Psal. 51. || Rom. 5.  
 \* Towerson on the Sacrament. Dr. Edwards  
 Preserv. against Socinianism; and Voss. Hist.  
 Pelag.

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how dangerous, when in opposition to one. To proceed :

What tho' *Wants, Calamities* and *Labours* are a Consequence of the *Fall*? Had they been so of the *Creation*, we should have had no more Reason to complain than the *Mole* has because it works its way blindly under Ground, or the *Snail* because it meanly creeps above it. And if 'twere no Injustice to make a Creature at first under such Disadvantages, how can it be any to *subject* it to them afterwards? But why do I call them Disadvantages? They are a Kindness rather, considering our Condition, as being of great use to strike a Damp upon Concupiscence, and divert our Minds from Sin and from Temptation; to keep up a mutual Dependence in Society, and thereby intercourses of Endearment; to sharpen Invention, spread a Spirit of Ingenuity thro' the World, and give the Head and the Hand all that Improvement they are capable of; to set us a studying the hidden Beauties of the Creation, the Harmony of Numbers and the Secrets of *Mechanism*, and so at once apply the great Force, that is in *Nature* to the Uses of Life, and give us an affecting Prospect of his adorable Perfections, who made all things in *Number, weight and measure*. Now how can we quar-

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quarrel with Allotments, or pronounce 'em *Evil* that have so much *Good* consequent upon them, is past my Apprehension. We may well be contented to buy Bread with Sweat, we do not over purchase, when Knowledge so beneficial and delightful is given into the Bargain.

Nor were it difficult to assign *peculiar* Benefits to every Infirmary apart, such as if well attended to, must needs make them sit comfortable as well as easy. Sickness, for *Example*, is a killing Blow to Lust, and a serious Monitor of Mortality. Old Age disables for Vice, and sounds a Retreat from the World and all its Vanities. But no Evil has more of Good accompanying it, than that which is included by Name in the Woman's Curse, and goes accordingly for the worst of Evils with that Sex, *Labouring with Child*. The *Nauseatings*, Fatigue and *Unwellness* of that Season, together with the Foresight of that *Bitterness* still to come, kindly bring the Mind home to it self, fix and unite the scatter'd Thoughts; and while they constrain them to lay aside other Business, give 'em more leisure to attend upon the Heavenly. Indeed their Reflections will run this way with wonderful speed, if they do but suffer 'em. The Throws of Travail, as bordering upon *Death*, are a warning to live in a State of

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*vinced touching the Fall.* 215

Preparation for it; as infinitely needing the Aids of Heaven, engage a Dependence on it, for Courage to meet, for Strength to bear, and for Patience to go thro' with 'em; as attended with Smart and Anguish, endear the Fruit of the Womb to her that is to cherish it. For *can the Mother forget her sucking Child?* The Question amounts to a *Negative*, and supposes she cannot on *this Ground*, that what comes with Pain and Difficulty, is valued in proportion. *The Cup* then which our Father hath given us, shall we not drink it? As ungrateful as it looks, it may well go down, having such a Mixture of *Sweet* to qualify the Bitterness.

What tho' *Death* be now our universal Doom? 'Tis *Death dis-*  
our Advantage too, allowing *arm'd.*  
Truth in the other Complaint  
that the Evils of Life just mention'd render Life a Burden, as it puts a *Period* to those Evils; but a greater yet, as it is an *Inlet* into Blessedness. As dark as the Valley is we are to go down into, Faith can see Light thro' it, and bring us up again. The Pangs of the last Gasps, and the *Disshonours* of the Grave are, I confess, an Honour to Nature and do want a softning, but *this* Philosophy and Grace can give them. The expiring Agonies, if we die in the Lord, are the last we have to feel.  
And



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And as for those Dishonours, we do not feel them, because dead and insensible. The better Part of us still enjoys a Being, and certainly *Abraham's Bosom* is the best Place to *prolong* and enjoy a Being in. Besides, those Considerations aside, *Immortal Life without dying* was not the Privilege at first, but the Prospect only of earthly Creatures; and there can be no wrong done, no Preterence of Disappointment, in the with-holding what was never promised. Not to mention that it were impossible now without a Miracle, if we reflect upon the many open, the infinite imperceptible ways of letting in Mortality; and what right have we to Miracles for a perpetual Preservation, when this Span of Life we have, this Spot of Earth we tread on is more than God Almighty oweth us. If there be any can think God their Debtor, they may expostulate with him about his Providences.

What, Lastly, if *A miserable Eternity* the Portion only of actual and wilful Transgressors. *Eternal Misery* in an unredeemed State had been inherited by us, this were no sadder Punishment than our own personal Iniquities deserv'd. Now where a meritorious Cause lies in view, that might have warranted the Infliction, 'tis impertinent to make a great ado about the *Impulsive*. But we

we no sooner became obnoxious to it, supposing (but not affirming) *that* the Import of Death in the *primitive Commination*, by the Miscarriage of *one*, than we were delivered from it by the Righteousness of *another*: as if Mercy travell'd with pain to it self till it brought forth the Fruits of Peace, as if Sin and Redemption were at strife which should run the faster. *Christ is the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World* in regard of his Efficacy, yea slain before it, says *St. Peter*, in respect of God's Decree. And therefore none of the Sons of *Adam* in any Age of the World cou'd have suffer'd the Pains of *eternal Fire* but such as prepar'd and brought Fuel for it thro' *actual Transgressions*. The *only* Case that can be thought at all *doubtful*, is that of *Children* who die before actual Sin and *unbaptiz'd*. But I know not why we shou'd be in great pain about them: *our Church* raises no Jealousies, neither did *Antiquity*. *If they shall never partake of Glory*, says *Nazianzen*, *neither shall they of Punishment*, because they rather suffer the loss of *Baptism* than any way occasion it themselves. A middle State then betwixt both was allotted 'em by the *Fathers*. But 'tis the Judgment of *Charity* they shall find a better, even Heaven it self. \* *Positive Ground of Hope* there is none as to their

\* *A. B. Laud's Confer. with Fisher. §. 15. Num. 4.*

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Salvation, (the reason our Church forbids the ordinary *Burial Office* to be used for such) but if we may run to the general Refuge of *uncovenanted* extraordinary *Grace* in any Case, we may in this, where there's no trusting the Issues of Eternity upon it, thro' a Contempt or Neglect of the *ordinary* Dispensations of Grace, but an absolute Impossibility of coming at them.

Now some have assign'd this Reason among others, and justly too, for the *Distinction* which God made betwixt lost Man and the fallen Angels, that he fell for others as well as himself; they for themselves only. The latter had no Dependents either in respect of *Nature* or *Destiny*, (Propagation being inconsistent with Angelical Nature) and so fell unpierced, receiving the just Reward of their Deeds, everlasting Vengeance; but when the former miscarried, an *Act of Grace* came hastning after him, with the *broad Seal* of Heaven upon it, chiefly sure in favour to the *Unborn* and the *Unfortunate*, *fœderally* represented by him. *Verily our Lord took not on him the Nature of Angels*, which he wou'd have done if he had satisfied for them, *but he took on him the Seed of Abraham*, in order to their Redemption. So the Scripture seems to glory in the kind Discrimination: As if the *Seed of Adam*, that as yet lay sweetly hid in their Causes,

Causes, had the Eye of Heaven most upon them, when he was thus singled out for Pity, that there might be a Blessing where-with to crown 'em in the Day of their Conception. Let it then be never said more, that we *consented* not to the *first* Transgression. We are amply consider'd for that in the Divine Procedure; and tho' the Consent of the Will may seem necessary to make it properly ours, yet wherein lies the hurt if it be so constructively, so long as there's nothing absolutely penal to follow it. The Consideration of our Interest in *his* Management shou'd have aw'd him *formerly*, but it need not disquiet us *now*, who have that Interest made amends for in the Imputation of *Christ's* Merits unto us for Righteousness. Did not the *presum'd* Treaty between God and *Adam* take along with it the *personal* Consent of all his Progeny? Neither did that between God the Father and God the Son entred into on our behalf. And therefore if any think it not fair they shou'd be at all the *worse* for the Breach of the one, neither is't fair to expect they shou'd be the *better* for the other. And what wou'd be their Case, were they excepted out of *that* Covenant, and unbenefited by *this*? A desirable one no doubt, such only as Infidels reckon on, and the Damn'd sigh for. Wou'd then a stupid Non-existence, or the

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sinking

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sinking back into the Womb of *general Nature*, the *End* of their Dogs and Horses, content 'em? If not, let 'em allow God to be Severe as well as Merciful. In short, 'tis the *Event* only that makes us so out of Charity with the *Law* given to *Adam*, the Observation or Transgression whereof on his part was to redound to the Account of his Posterity. Had he but observ'd it, and so reach'd out the Fruits of his wise Conduct to all the World, we had been all pleas'd with the Dispensation, as highly reasonable. Happiness of another's procuring wou'd have been welcome; but a Wound of another's giving is otherwise receiv'd, tho' it brings a *Plaster* with it as large as the *Sore* from the Hands of Heaven.

*A recapitulatory Account of our Concernment in Adam.*

To sum up all and give my Thoughts in a little compass, God made an *Agreement* with *Adam*, that if in Conjunction with the Law of Nature (to which he stood oblig'd in consequence of his ordinary State and Being as a Creature) he wou'd obey that *single* Precept of abstaining from a certain Fruit in the Garden, he and all that shou'd spring from him in the *Ages* to come, shou'd enjoy what he had given him already, and a blessed Immortality besides. But if not, They shou'd



shou'd forfeit together with him, and by him, what God had so graciously bestow'd, and moreover become liable to his Displeasure. *Adam* disobeys, and God is thereupon mov'd to a *severer* Intercourse with his *Posterity*. A corrupt Nature, a sickly Condition, and a temporal Death take place on all; and an eternal Separation from the Presence of God, is allotted for those that will not accept of Salvation by the Gospel. In all this, the strictest Punctilio's of Justice and Reason are observ'd. No Man is *punish'd* for the Faults of *another*. All Men are *afflicted* for the Faults of another imputed to them, with many *temporary* Evils. But these Afflictions neither are nor were intended as *absolute* Punishments, but as wholsom *Discipline* in the *School* of Vertue. All God meant by threatening 'em at first, I conceive, was to interest *Adam's* Bowels in his Duty, and engage him for the sake of his Children as well as own to look to it. And tho' he had not been their fœderal Head, or Trustee, yet being the Root of Mankind; they would have befallen them in a natural way of Conveyance. We shou'd have followed the Fate of our common Ancestor, and suffer'd with him in Temporals, as the unhappy Heir does with a Traytor, that forfeits his Estate and Honour. But this is certain, no Man shall

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suffer *finally, Eternally*, but for his own strict Demerit. In that severe Sence, *the Soul that sinneth, it alone shall die*; and every Transgressor shall *bear his own Burden*, not anothers. What God wou'd have done with our Souls (for our \* Bodies wou'd have been left to Corruption, to do its worst upon them) or what he cou'd have done in Justice, in case Mercy had not interven'd in the manner it did, I dare not pretend to know or indeed enquire. A Condition we were never in, our Thoughts have no business with, any farther than the contemplating it may serve to heighten our Joy for that wherein we stand. 'Tis sufficient for our Satisfaction that he has done enough for our Souls in conjunction with our Bodies, to make 'em holy here and happy for ever.

Little Reason have they of the contrary Opinion to object *this* to ours. That it makes the Sin of *one* ruinous and *dammning* to Millions. We say no such thing, and to prevent our saying it, the Histories of our Fall and of our Recovery go together in holy Scripture. Sure I am, the learned \* Bull quotes Bishop Hooper, that bore a

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\* V. Bull's Thes. prim. in Append. ad Exam. Animadversf.

† Apolog. pro Harm. p. 103. 111. Edit. 4to.

figure in the Convocation that fram'd our Articles, and a Martyr too under the Marian Persecution, as teaching, that not a Man shall fall into Perdition thro' the weight of Original Sin only, and he quotes him with Approbation. Sure I am too, \* Dr. Heylin, while he argues for Original Sin, and that from Rom. 5. supposes personal Guiltiness added to it before actual Condemnation by it. I mention these great Names (as I might multitudes more) to show that the Article of our Church concerning it may be maintain'd without giving any shock to the tenderesses of human Nature, or offering any Violence to the Compassions of the Divine.

This may serve to justify Providence as to this Transgression: But we shall have more to say for it, if it can be made appear that the Advantages of our present State over-balance those of the *Paradisiacal*. Let us then make a Trial. Now 'tis true, Adam innocent stood exempted from all those secular Evils Nature cou'd not but take delight in; Health and Indolence strike smooth and gently upon the Sense, and are attended with a thousand pleasing Images which Pain and Sicknes chase away. But still

*The Gospel - State  
preferable to  
Paradise.*

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\* Heylin on *Apost. Creed*. p. 434.

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these are Evils we shou'd not know to be such but for our *feeling* ; and as great an Inconvenience as they are in one respect, in point of *Ease*, they are a Convenience in another, in regard of *Vertue*. For they prove it, they exercise it, they confirm it; as the Tree that is most expos'd to the Wind, takes the deepest Root. *Tribulation worketh Patience, Patience Experience, and Experience Hope*, that is, *one* Calamity, by taking away a darling Trifle, helpeth us to a *whole Chain* of most excellent Graces. And if that be not more than a Reparation, let any Man judge, that is not such a Creature of Sense as to be govern'd only by the Impressions *that* gives him.

Again, *Adam innocent* was a perfect Stranger to those Clouds of Understanding and Depravities of Will we so much groan under ; and such a Privilege cou'd not but facilitate a wise Choice. But then is it not the *Difficulty* that makes the *Vertue* of such a Choice ? Is it not the Combat between Appetite and Reason, that lays the Foundation for Victory and Triumph ? And does not in proportion as the Combat is sharper, the Victory become the more valuable, and the Triumph the more glorious ? If *he* enjoy'd the Blessings of a penetrating Apprehension, a sincere Mind, and compos'd Affections, did not his Account swell with his grand  
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Receipts? Was not he bound to the most exalted Thoughts of the Divine Nature, the highest Strains of extatic Joy and Complacency in God's Perfections, and the most passionate Applications of *seraphic Love* imaginable, and being so like an Angel oblig'd to act like one too? If we imbarque in the World less qualified to form right Judgments, and make wise Estimations of things, are there not large Abatements of Favour, and liberal Allowances for Mistake and Surprize? As *Stumbles* are more pardonable by Night than by Day. Is not a slower Pace in Duty accepted from us because of that weight and load upon our Faculties? May we not creep, if we cannot run, in the Paths of God's Commandments? *Yes verily, he that now goeth on his way sorrowing, and bringeth forth good Seed, shall come again with joy and bring his Sheaves with him.* The full Debt of Innocence is not demanded in our broken and bankrupt State. And if so, how are those higher Capacities miss'd or needed.

Again, *Adam innocent* had a Power of *Perseverance*, perhaps a *Supernatural Grace*, added to his other Perfections for his better Security. But we know he fell notwithstanding it. There was but a bare possibility of sinning, yet that was reduced into Act, and when it



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was so, he had continued sinning on without Thought or Power of Amendment, supposing no Redemption by a *second Adam*. For so the fallen Angels do, being left to themselves they hold out in their Rebellion: and sacred History leaves it doubtful, whether there was any dawning toward Repentance in him, antecedently to the establishment of the *Gospel Covenant* in the *promis'd Seed*, or rather suggests the contrary, by acquainting us with his *vain Apology*, that look'd like a Conceit that he needed no Repentance. His *second and better Thoughts* then were deriv'd from that Covenant: and so his Fall, accidentally, *occasionally* help'd him to that Supply of heavenly Aids, which it first caus'd him to stand in so much need of. And does not this mightily set off the *present Estate of things*, that *Adam* himself was beholden to it for his Deliverance from Sin and Ruin? Had we been plac'd in his *first Circumstances*, it seems, we might have stood, and we might too have fallen, and having *once* done so, cou'd not have got up again without a new Expedient found out for our Recovery. Whereas, as Matters now stand with us, if we fall seven times a Day, there are still Succours in reserve: We have Strength to *stand* and we have Grace to recover our footing again when we are *down*. *God*

Spareth

*spareth us as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him.* He treats us indeed in a rational way, because we are rational, setting before us Life and Death, our Duty, and the Consequence of doing or not doing it. But then he treats us too in a condescensive manner, because we are weak, enabling us to do our Duty, and when we have not done according to it, accepting our Sorrow for what we have done.

Farther, *Adam innocent* had a \* possibility of never dying; but it being possible for him to sin, was he not also under a possibility of dying, consequently of continuing under Death for ever, if the Covenant of Grace had not been. On the other hand, *it is appointed for all Men once to die*, without any regard had to their actual sinning: but in recompence for this Necessity of dying, we live again, and, in case we die in a State of Sorrow for Sin, and humble Penitence, we live for evermore, never again liable either to Sin or Death.

Lastly, 'tis suppos'd, that if *Adam* had continued *innocent*, the Scene of his Hap-

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\* Sicut prima immortalitas fuit quam peccando Adam perdidit, posse non mori, novissima erit non posse mori; ita primum liberum Arbitrium, posse non peccare, novissimum non posse peccare, &c. 1 Aug. de civ. Dei. l. 22. c. 30.

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piness wou'd have been shifted from Earth to Heaven. The whole Stream of *Christian* Antiquity runneth this \* way. And several Reasons besides may be given for so blessed a Remove. *First*, After all the high Flights of Fancy, and Soar of Thought in its Description, Earth is but Earth still, and in its very best Estate, cou'd hardly have been good enough for a Being of such Excellencies, otherwise than as a travelling Conveniency, a Place of temporary Reception in his Passage to a better Country. Nor, *Secondly*, cou'd it have been large enough to give a Dwelling and Subsistence to all those Myriads of Men and Women which shou'd have descended from him; unless some *Colonies* of the diviner Souls had been transplanted into the World of Spirits to make room for a Succession. And, *Thirdly*, if there be Truth in the common Persuasion that *Adam's Body in Paradise had the Principles of Corruption in it*, its Support in time wou'd have been a forced thing; and nothing that is so, useth to be perpetual. Whence it seems to follow, that to have the Promise of living for ever, fulfilled to him, he must after a certain period of his earthly Life, have been promoted to an Heavenly. A *Fourth*

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\* See Bp. Bull's *Sermons*, p. 1092. &c.

Argument with the *Fathers*, lay in their manner of accounting for the primitive Temptation. They concluded *Satan's* spight to *Man* must be grounded on a Fore-sight of his Exaltation. There had been a blessed Communion with God already, and great matter of Proficiency was ministred to him, that he might make nearer and nearer Approaches to the Divine Life, and at length ripen into Perfection. This divine Intercourse look'd like a training him up for God, and a better Place, and being so interpreted, it soon drew an evil Eye upon it. Hereupon debas'd Lucifer, they say, counterplotted Heaven: The Thought was so very galling, that himself should have no more place there, and a Creature of inferior Order be advanced to his Seat and Honour.

But still this is but *probable* Reasoning built on no infallible Authority. Revelation, the only sure Informer in such Matters, is reserved upon the Point. There is some room therefore for the *contrary* Opinion to come in, that he was *designed only for a terrestrial Paradise*, a Felicity the same almost in *kind* with what we at this Day enjoy, but higher much in *Degree*; that is, a Mixture of bodily Pleasures and spiritual Enjoyments. And it may be argued, if the *Life of Glory* had been

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been annex'd to an unfinning Obedience, it wou'd surely have been reveal'd in order to the engaging that Obedience, that it was finally to reward. However, since (for ought appears) it was not reveal'd, Adam cou'd only hope for it as an *absolute* Gift after a Course of holy Living, he cou'd at the best but carry up that Hope to a strong Presumption, by making the most of the general implicate Promise of living for ever, but he cou'd not reckon upon it as a Certainty. But admit it had been expressly promis'd (which no Body will say) as well as really intended, yet Heaven to him wou'd still have been Heaven under some Alloy or *comparative* Defect; it wou'd not have come to him recommended by the Difficulties and *Endearments* of a Redemption. On the contrary, Heaven and all its Joys, Joys most Divine for kind, most transcendent for Degree, Joys great in every respect, but greater still for the Union of our Nature with the *Son of the Blessed*, for the amazing Stoops of his Greatness, the wondrous Adventures of his Love, and the dark Stages of Woe he pass'd to purchase them, are the clear and *express* Promises of God to us his Children. Christ has constituted us *Co-heirs* with himself, and we have the *Evidences* of this Inheritance in our own keeping



keeping. And the *Security* of the Gift is as comfortable as the Gift it self, for that by raising a just and sweet Expectation, it puts us in Possession of part of it already.

When this Consideration therefore is added to the former, and the whole Account cast up, What can be more evident, than that the *last Estate of Man* is better than the *first*? Stronger Temptations now encounter him; consequently his Vertue is more laudable. The Auxiliaries of Divine Grace pay a kind Attendance all his Life long; consequently his Vertue is better guarded. A Resurrection after Death is *absolutely* allotted him; consequently his Being is more secure. The Top-Fruititions of *another World* expect him, as being *conditionally* insur'd to him; consequently his Reward is more glorious. Thus upon a due Estimate and Comparison of Things and States, the Odds of Advantage do plainly lie on the side of our Condition since the Fall. And what Inference more proper from the wish'd for Discovery, than that Song of Moses, and of the Lamb; Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy Ways, O King of Saints! 'Twas the known Saying of St. Austin, God who is infinitely good, wou'd

*This Head touching the Divine Procedure, in regard of the Fall, shew up in a devout Meditation.*  
never

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never permit Evil, were he not also infinitely wise, and knew how to bring Good out of it. Now the good, the happy, Results of the Evil we have been so long considering, and its *Permission*, are high Demonstrations of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness. His *Wisdom* here appears in that it could connect such distant and opposite things as *Sin* and *Salvation* into a Dependence of the one upon the other; for if our common Ancestor had not sinn'd, how had we been *saved*? Our Rise was the Effect of his Fall. His *Goodness* here appears in that he took away our Happiness, only to give it back with Advantage, exchanging, perhaps an earthly Immortality for an heavenly; certainly a less measure of Bliss for a greater. His Wisdom and Goodness both appear in that he left such Weaknesses on our Natures, as serve at once for Tokens of his Displeasure against Sin, Arguments for our Dependence upon Grace, and Means of training us up to Glory. And how can we enough admire a Dispensation like *this*, so full of Love, and so full of Wonder? If a *Watch* goes right, we are not concern'd to see the Wheels of it move all with contrary Motions to each other, yea, rather we admire the little Engine when taught, that 'tis those contrary Motions which make it go so.

*What Thoughts and Conduct, &c. 233*

so. And methinks it shou'd stop the foul Mouth of Blasphemy, that has so oft bespatter'd the Oeconomy of the moral World, to be told how that Machine has all the Regularity we cou'd wish it, notwithstanding the intricate Revolutions and Turnings in it; yea, and what is more, owes it to them. The Imputations of Injustice sure must cease for ever: But if Folly and Atheism will lay 'em still against Providence, the Christian Ear is deaf to such Absurdities.

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C H A P. X.

*What Thoughts and Conduct proper in our fallen Estate and Condition.*

**T**HOU' the *several Lights* in which I have taken a Prospect of God's Proceedings, and of his Righteousness therein, may help Men to see a little into them, and incline 'em too to acquit the Judge, yet still I fear, there are secret Risings of Heart against the *Criminal*. But as there is no Ground for censuring God,  
so

so neither for reviling our first Parents. Indeed by reviling them too *warmly* we interpretatively censure him as not having done well, either in permitting them to do so ill, or else in admitting them to pardon after they had done so. Tho' they may be the immediate Object of our Reproaches, they thus strike Heaven in the Rebound. It concerns us therefore, in point of Justice, not to be too severe upon their Memory. We cannot indeed help entertaining a Thought to their Disadvantage. This over-officious Truth will thrust it self upon us, and we are not able to resist it; That they were not faithful Depositories of our, and their own Happiness. There is no arguing for them to be sure, because that would be to argue *against* a good Providence, to overthrow the Arguments I've been alledging *for* it, as forcible and convictive. But we may not, on the contrary, extract all the Venom without taking any of the Alloy, may not ravingly execrate them, or their Mis-conduct, or pretendingly say, We wou'd not have fallen with them and betrayed a Trust of so vast a Moment. Largeness of Soul will find some Excuse even for them that had so bad an hand at excusing themselves; will allow their Case to be pitiable, because otherwise it had not been took into

Confide-

Consideration by that God who is wise as well as merciful. At least scorn to lay a foreign Load to them of *underw'd* Infirmities, as the manner of some is, who are loth to acknowledge that to be their own Act, which they must acknowledge to be criminal. *Joseph* when he cou'd not vindicate his *Brethren's* past Management, yet befriended it with an *Extenuation* from the Consequences. *As for you, ye thought Evil against me, but God meant it unto Good, to bring to pass*

*Ways of soft-  
ning Adam's  
Mis-manage-  
ment in our  
Thoughts.*

*as it is this Day to save much People alive.* What was so very black, cou'd receive no other Colour. Therefore a Charge comes out against them; but then he slides hastily off to a Theme that wou'd bear to be dwelt on, and leave no Corner of the Soul open for gloomy Contemplations. And the same Words, a little varied, may besit the present Case. As for *Adam*, he managed, 'tis true, as tho' he thought Evil against us and himself too, but God meant all for Good, to take rise from the Breach of one Covenant to introduce another, establish'd upon better Promises. Thus the *sad Story* is strip'd of half its Horror; and who wou'd not behold a Thing that is so frightful in that Light that most favours it.

Besides,



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Besides, I've something else to offer that will much take off, if not from the Shock of your Imagination, yet from the Sharpness of your Passion; That we cannot more reproach him than he did himself upon Recollection. Think how his poor Heart was rended, and his Soul pierc'd through with Sorrow, when he had thrown himself out of all that an happy Man cou'd have, or a wretched Man need, while the Angels, his elder Brethren dwelt in the House of his Father, not breaking the least of his Commandments. Think again, how he *sorrow'd most of all*, when in a close and searching Thought he beheld his universal Progeny, yet unborn, as quite undone by his riotous Act, and shut out of eternal Blessedness; view him but in this melancholly Position, and you can't but be touch'd with the softer Pangs of Commiseration and Pity, to answer those of Remorse and Bitterness. Heaven in great Compassion heard his Agonies, and relented when he did, yea, was beforehand with him in relenting; Mercy cou'd not stand expecting his Submission, while it set against the Sin the Force of the Inducements to it. Wherefore 'twill become us sure, instead of exposing *unnecessarily*, to draw a Veil over his blushing Nakedness. There is a *good side* of him for us to look on, his Repentance

Repentance, and that shou'd be regarded, while the other is forgot; as in an Echo the last Words only will reverberate.

Nor wou'd I have Men any more out of Charity with *Eve* on the account of her being first in the *Transgression*. For are we sure the other wou'd not have been so, if first in the *Temptation*? Besides she and the whole Sex after her have suffer'd the Curse in the *Pain of Child-birth*; and undergoing the Law is allow'd a Satisfaction for the most Guilty. Let not any then indulge themselves in *Investives* against her or them, or challenge God for making so useless and mischievous a Part of the Creation as some wou'd have Woman. Say the worst of her, she is still the *Mother of all living*; and if *Age* alone claims respect by the Rule of Decency and good Nature, much more the greatest Age back'd with the Privileges of *Relation*. To run back to the World's Infancy for Matter of Calumny and Reflection argues Rancour in Perfection, such a Spirit of Malignity as I want a Name for. But if the Weight of Censure must fall there, let it not however descend. To draw Generals from Particulars is ill in *Logick*, but worse in *Morality*. Every Woman is not an

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an *Eve*, let Experience speak. *The devout Sex*, the Fathers call it: It seems, they did not think it an Error in Creation. And when God wou'd magnify his own Goodness, particularly, his Compassion, he illustrates it by that of Women. I speak not this to flatter, but to vindicate them. Pride was not made for them, but they for Religion. Their Mould, being soft, renders them most receptive of good Impressions. Their Education, being reserv'd, means to keep 'em out of the way of evil ones. So that shou'd they prove bad, they wou'd be so to an *Emphasis*, bad against the strongest Instincts, bad against all the Guards of Providence. Now where Circumstances are so very happy, Presumption shou'd lie on the side of Virtue: And we ought not to rally any for their *Kind*, but only for their known Impieties or Misbehaviour. *Say the worst of them*, they are still Nature's sweetest Pride, and we cannot well live without them, much less survive in a Posterity. And let me add, lastly, to strike virulent Wit and Malice dumb, That *the Mother of our Lord* fully retriev'd the *Female Honour* by her Virgin-Innocence which qualified her to be so. Was *Woman* then the spring of Woe to *Man*? It was the *Seed of the Woman* that redeemed Man. And if we place the Good  
against

against the Evil, the Evil ceases to be Evil by being over-balanc'd.

Well but then is there to be no Concern at all for a *lost Happiness* which we can call back only by the help of Memory and long Reflection? When we behold the venerable Ruines of some ancient stately Pile, how apt are we to shake our Heads over its Desolations? Yea, it pitieth us to see it groveling in the Dust, tho' we know Time and not any extraordinary Accident laid its Honour there, and yet it yielded only to the Pressures and Importunities of Age. And shall the human Nature fall to the Ground almost as soon as it is built, all at once without any gradual Lessenings and Declensions by the worst of Accidents, Sin; and no Tear fall after it? We are too much interested to be unaffected. We must, we cannot help dropping a Sigh or two upon the horrible Shatter, the sad Relicks of its primitive Glory. But still there is no Reason we shou'd sit melting over them. As *Mourning* is a proper Habit for the *Afflicted*, but not for those who have liv'd to see their Affliction prove a Blessing to them. As poor Relicks as they are, they carry something of Dignity in them when well understood; they are worth the Husbanding

*A good Life,  
the best Improve-  
ment of our Fall.*

banding, and our time will be better spent about that, than in fruitless Lamentations. As when a lofty Structure tumbles, Men think not their Labour ill bestow'd in clearing the Confusion, in removing the wild Rubbish, in recovering the noble Fragments of Sculpture and other magnificent Pieces that lie buried under it, and accomodating them as well as is possible to their ancient Places and Positions. Is then our Understanding darkned, our Will warp'd, and our Inclinations bent quite the wrong way? Why don't we then set about repairing the Misadventure by earnestly seeking and diligently improving the Assistances which God has promis'd to all our Weaknesses? Is the divine Image miserably blotted in us, why don't we fetch off the Stains as well as we can by cleansing our selves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit? Is *Nature without* also, as following strictly the Law of its Curse, become unkind? How shou'd this send us to take refuge in the Consolations of the Gospel? I cannot but think that Paradise is *lost* to us, not only as to Enjoyment, but in respect of our very Knowledge for this very Purpose, that we might be taught to transfer our Affections from Earth to Heaven. Were *that delightful Portion* still in view, it might arrest our Thoughts when they



they shou'd be soaring after higher Objects, a Better Place; but now that it is missing, what is there to enamour or delude us? *Vanity*, nay, *Vanity of Vanities* is superscrib'd upon *all things under the Sun*. Prickles grow up with the Roses to scratch our Hands if we will gather them; and the Cares of this World tear our Minds, while we are grasping after it, to make us think of a Remove. *St. Austin* somewhere has this Reflection, *The World troubles and molests me, and yet I love it; what if it did not trouble me?* Certainly in that too happy Case we shou'd stake down our very Souls to it, and esteem it too good to be parted with.

I confess we are sadly reduc'd; yet after all an embarrass'd Estate is better than none at all. The Soul of Man has its Encumbrances in *Original Corruption*; but it can outgrow and work 'em off in time to a good degree of Ease and Lightfomness, in the Strength of Divine Grace and its own Endeavours. And if we will but thus make the best of our broken Fortunes, we may become as great as we please in another Life. The most sullied Transcript of the Divine Perfections, as well as the *first bright Copy*, has a fair Turn to shine in Glory. *As we have born the Image of the earthy (Adam) we shall also bear the Image*  
M of

of the heavenly: And when this blessed Change comes, (O that it were already come!) and *Death is swallow'd up in Victory*, 'twill then be pleasant to look back upon the Breaches of Humanity, (now made up again) as Foils to all our Glory, 'twill then make a new Heaven in Heaven it self to recollect how we got thither.

But while we are contemplating the Blissful Consequences of a recovered Innocence, or what is accepted for Innocence, a sincere Endeavour against Sin and Frailty, let us not forget the dire ones of Obstinacy and Impenitence. For we must not think that *God justifies the Ungodly*, that is, such as still continue so. So far from that, that he threatens 'em with Death, such a Death as no less surpasses the Penalty of the first Covenant, than the Life promis'd under the second does the Recompences of the same Covenant. *This is the great Condemnation*: Salvation is provided for Sinners and they will not be saved, will not believe in the Name of the only begotten Son of God by which they might be saved! *To trample under foot the Blood of Jesus*, and kick against his Bowels of Compassion: *To do despite to the Spirit of Grace*, and turn our backs up-  
on

on his loving Overtures. These are Sins Devils could not be guilty of, and Adam was not; and if his Children should, I tremble to think what an Hell will be kindled for them. Alas! while they stretch themselves on the Ground, and wallow in the Mire, 'tis not enough to say, Adam laid 'em there. Since they have a Remedy against the Effects of his Sin, in the Blessings of the Gospel; against the Example of his Sin in the Example of his Punishment, yea, and, as 'tis charitably believ'd; in that of his Conversion. Excellent to this purpose is that Remark of Tertullian; \* *Being conscious to my self, I am a great Sinner, I cannot easily be silent concerning Repentance, for that I find it preach'd and recommended to all Posterity by our first Parent Adam, as that which he found by Experience to have been the only Expedient of restoring him back to Paradise, (that is, of bringing him to such a State as was more than an Equivalent of Paradise) after he had sinned against God. 'Tis not enough to*

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\* Cum ipse omnium Notarum sim peccator & nulli rei natus nisi Pœnitentiæ, non facile possum super illâ tacere quam ipse & stirpis humanæ & offensæ in Dominum princeps Adam exomologesi restitutus in Paradisum suum non tacet.

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*say neither that it is Christ that died, - yea, rather that is risen again. 'Twere better he had not died, if they do not also die unto Sin, and rise again unto Righteousness. For otherwise he loses the very end of his Death, the Honour of his Sufferings. And let any body judge whether defeated Mercy, provok'd Goodness, is not like to be the severest Attribute in the Godhead. But we will not make the dangerous Experiment. We had much rather Mercy shou'd rejoyce against Judgment. We wish well to the Prediction of our crucified Saviour, He shall see of the Travail of his Soul and be satisfied.*



*Tri-uni Deo Gloria.*

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## ERRATA.

**P**Age 9. line 3. for *degar*ding read *degrad-*  
*ing.* p. 37. for *Propriety* r. *Prosperity.* p.  
44. for *Words* r. *Worlds.* p. 112. for *profess'd*  
r. *possess'd.* p. 224. for *sincere* r. *serene.* p.  
237. insert the Words, *of the Creation,* after  
the Word, *Part.* p. 236. for *yet* r. *that.*

Page 10. and elsewhere in the Margin, for  
*Bishop Bull's Sermon.* read *Discourses.*

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ERRATA



Page 9 line 2. "the word" for "the word".  
Page 37. "the word" for "the word".  
Page 44. "the word" for "the word".  
Page 45. "the word" for "the word".  
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